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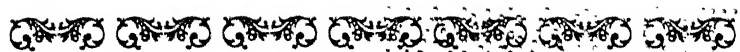
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# WHITE ELEPHANTS IN THE CARIBBEAN



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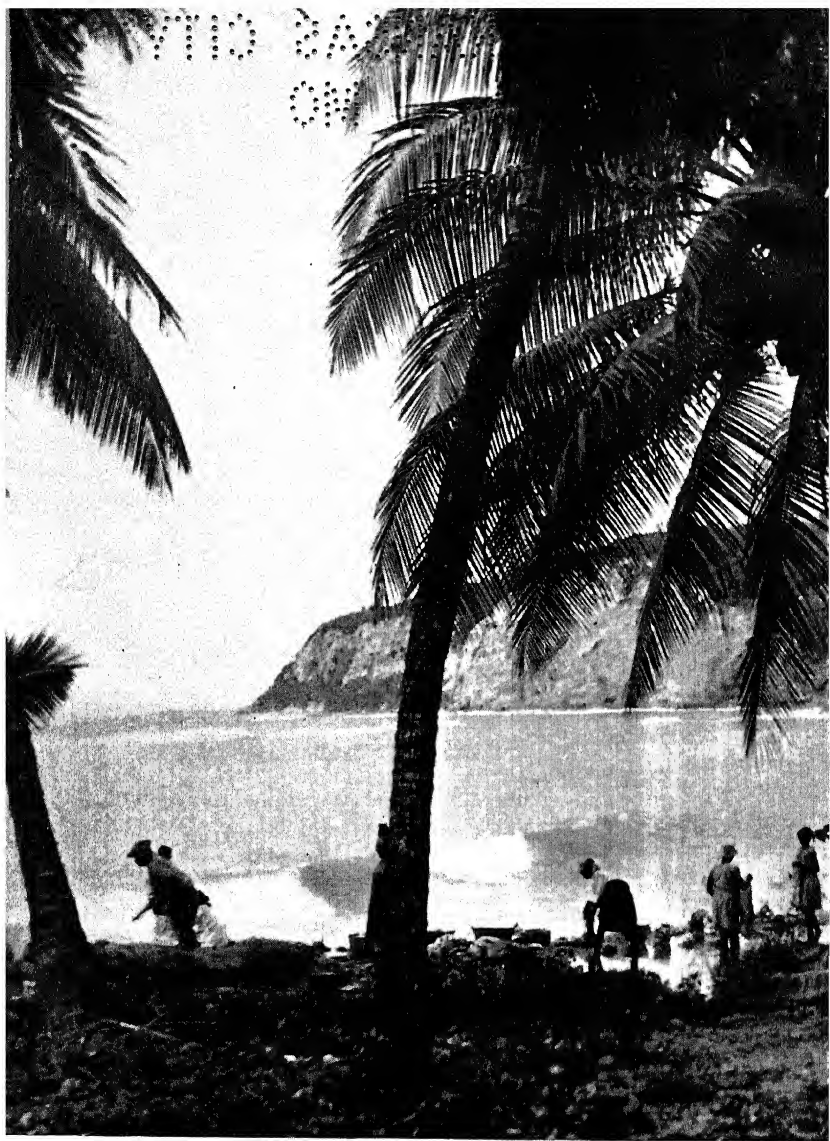
MEET THE JAPANESE

GERMANY TODAY, AND TOMORROW

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHILIP H. KATZ

1984



Morant Bay, Jamaica, one of the beauty spots of that tropical island where the atmosphere of the South Seas can be captured within a few days sail from American shores.

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# WHITE ELEPHANTS IN THE CARIBBEAN

A MAGIC JOURNEY THROUGH ALL THE WEST INDIES

BY

HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

*ILLUSTRATED*

NEW



YORK

ROBERT M. McBRIDE & COMPANY

WILSON

WHITE ELEPHANTS IN THE CARIBBEAN

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TO

*My Constant Traveling Companion*

MY WIFE

*Who Rode All the White Elephants with Me*





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## FOREWORD

THE sheer romance of the West Indies!

Inherent, inbred, ingrained; imported, in associations, in story and in history.

Romance in all its shimmering shades of meaning; of imagination, of dreams, of the incredible; of adventure forever past and ever present. Of faraway things brought near, of tangible things disembodied in mysticism. Of eerie tales come true before one's eyes, of dread doings all through the night in the neighboring jungle. Of a million hapless aborigines and their annihilation almost within the lifetime of a single man; of the unparalleled barbarism of sixteenth-century civilization and a golden age of culture; of a million simple Africans shanghaied in stinking hulks and transplanted in chains to a New World. Of the greatest maritime nations of their day locked in death grips and Armageddon, rising to and falling from world power in the waters of the Caribbees. Of pirates and buccaneers, their castles, haunts and hideaways and their trails of buried gold in caverns by the sea. Spain in the zenith of her glory and in the depths of her decay. France, the Netherlands and England in the rôle of envious sea

## FOREWORD

wolves and licensed pirates more barbarous than the buccaneers themselves. Galleons loaded with gold and treasure beyond the dreams of avarice. Conquistadors—pompous in their religion, magnificent in their courage, spectacular in their roguery and precious in their cruelty. Cities, like Cartagena, that Mother Spain envied in their splendor; fortifications that again and again emptied the coffers of Castile. Pirate cities—like Port Royal, that sank into the sea at the height of her ignominious glory. The Fountain of Youth sought in vain by Ponce de León, but found and bathed in today by passing tourists. A Citadelle, counted among the Ten Wonders of the World, built at the top of a mountain in the heart of the jungle of Haiti by an untutored slave who defeated the army sent by Napoleon, and became emperor of three million black people. One of Nature's greatest phenomena, a bottomless pit of asphalt, in Trinidad. St. Pierre, a second Pompeii, where forty thousand were buried under the lava of Mount Pelée, in our time. Everywhere the mills, stacks and machinery in ruins of man's dreams of White Gold—sugar, the will-o'-the-wisp of every generation. The farmstead in Martinique where Napoleon's Josephine first saw the light of day; the birthplace of Alexander Hamilton in Nevis; the town where the father of Alexandre Dumas *père* was born, in Santo Domingo. The rugged stages with the scenery but little changed, where dramas were enacted with such distinguished characters taking their own picturesque parts: Blackbeard and Morgan, the pirates; Admiral Cervera and General Weyler, Christopher Columbus, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Rodney, Admiral Nelson, General Leclerc, Toussaint L'Ouverture,

## FOREWORD

Henri Christophe, George Washington, John Paul Jones, Ponce de León, Pizarro, Balboa, General Goethals, Ferdinand de Lesseps, Lafcadio Hearn, Dictator Trujillo, etc. Only the words of a Barnum could find the superlatives to picture such an attraction featuring such headliners. Handfuls of whites and near-whites still ruling millions of blacks. Everywhere, the firm, tough, persistent fiber of Spain enduring, encrusted with the more or less uncultured civilization of Africa, whose undertones and overtones may be heard all through the day and night, despite the slight veneer of the conqueror whites. Each and every island as different from each and all the others as the personality of one man is different from those of his fellows; yet all with the same exotic keynote. The variety, the variations and the diverseness of the Indies is something like that, only infinitely more so.

No one has a more acute conception of the task of presenting a practicable working picture of this huge canvas than the author. Travel, residence and intimate studies, aggregating the better part of two years, have proved that similar volumes written about some of Europe's larger countries have been child's play by comparison. Distance, as the crow flies, counts for nothing. There are always islands and then other islands beyond the sea that stands between, placing one at the mercy of small boats, large ships and seaplanes, none of which is considerate of time, itineraries or plans other than its own, which seems selfish and is inadequate at best. No ship begins to cover all the islands, not even on a cruise. The present writer had to return to New York and start over again five times during the course of a single year, in order to reach

## FOREWORD

practically neighboring islands. The large ships do not visit many of the islands at all, while some of the smaller interisland craft wait to accumulate a cargo or sail only once a month. If one should wait at their bid and call, it might consume years to visit all the islands.

Many liberties have been taken in the matters of geographic terminology and limitations, but only in the large. The author has traveled beyond the twelve-mile statute of limitations, so to speak, of both the West Indies and the Caribbean Sea. Again and again, I sail out of the Caribbean to visit some of the choicest islands. In taking up the Spanish Main I leave both sea and islands and invade the mainland of South America. In this particular, my visit to British Guiana takes complete leave of the Spanish Main!

Encyclopedias, geographies, histories and guide-books covering these islands and their surrounding seas and shores, competent and essential in their respective aspects and needs, are numerous and requisite repositories of general information. It does not lie within their province to depict the lifeblood, the backbone, the heart and the soul of them. It is in the hope of giving some glimpses of these living features that this book has been written. A guide-book in a sense, yes; but more of a hand-book and a head-book of the peoples, their problems, their human nature and mental make-up, their *raison d'être* and their destiny. Countries seen in terms of their countrymen; interpretations of peoples. Bare hints of their *comédie humaine*. Not only the inanimate and externally pictorial, but the motivation stirring the whole into the living scene.

No two persons ever see the same sights in precisely

## FOREWORD

the same way or record their impressions in exactly the same manner. From that standpoint, I hope to add this to my list of Me-Books. My map will probably be more psychological than Mercator. "Seeing the West Indies Without a Compass" would be an equally appropriate title. I may leave out many of the sights that guide-books say one "ought to see" and use up that formally prescribed and precious space with a passing fancy or a vagrant figure or a sordid scene, to which no one but myself would have given a second thought. However, with pronounced leanings toward the humanities and human interest, there is always a meaning behind such madness.

No one can truthfully say that the average tourist or traveler is interested only in the topography of countries, the exterior beauties or the superficial sights, with no earnest regard for their deeper significances, their international relationships, their essential backgrounds. Mere picture-book tourisms is a dangerous source of snap judgment. A little sober contemplation in travel inevitably leads to better understanding, tolerance and international goodwill—so desirable in these and all other times.

Knowing who and what the people are can give it that three-dimensional form, tangibility and articulation that not only make the scene come to life, but also illuminate deeds and the mere commonplace with intelligibility and understanding. Time shall play not a fixed but an intrinsic part in our scheme. Naturally, we are particularly concerned with today—or the date of our visit—but without foreknowledge, nearly everything that we shall see lacks significance or potential meaning; the rich romance with which every picture is latent and laden would be sadly



## FOREWORD

missing, and all we should have for the pains of our journey would be a charming sea voyage and, hanging in our memory, a series of pastel panels—without depth or character, and so identical as to be unidentifiable.

That the reader may behold some animated glimpses of the West Indies, of the Caribbean and the Spanish Main, at least as the author saw and felt them, is the earnest and anxious wish of

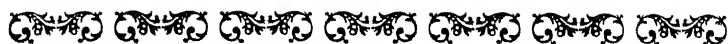
HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

“Wayte Awhyle II”  
Redding, Connecticut



# WHITE ELEPHANTS IN THE CARIBBEAN





## Chapter One

### THE WEST INDIES

*Proposed Symphony—Fate of the Aborigines—Biological  
Fitness—Black Islands—Man versus the Jungle—Black  
Social Life—Island Groups—These Once Princely Islands!  
—Ruins—Poverty—America Discovers the Islands*

A PROLONGED procession of mystic, luminous nights in tropical seas. The sun going down like thunder over a horizon barricaded with fantastic clouds—a ruddy gold, then fiercely crimson, changing to angry purple and sullen black. Islands rise out of the sea, like passing ships of floating greenery. A shore line of waving palms, serried mountain peaks more often than not festooning the sky line. Lapis or malachite waters musically lapping the sides of the ship, as though biding their season to rise and toss in angry passion, that every tropical traveler soon learns to distrust. Vivid nights, with stars sparkling with uncanny brilliance and nearness in a silvery blue canopy. Night after night, a brazen moon audaciously swaying in the highest heavens, wryly reflected in the velvet waters. Dancing clouds scudding about, mischievously throwing light scarves of wool over the face of the moon, or gathering in groups to build fluffy castles and fanciful figures along the horizon's edge.

## WHITE ELEPHANTS IN THE CARIBBEAN

In the midst of such a setting, even the least imaginative among us must feel the brush of the wings of romance, be deeply stirred and begin to envision at least some of that gorgeous cavalcade of the Indies plowing through the most famous sea of romance and adventure recorded in the pages of all world history and literature. Ports of romance; isles of enchantment! Scarcely a square mile of waters that is not strewn with splendid wreckage—Spanish galleons, chests of gold, brave men's bones.

This Caribbean that surrounds us was the vestibule of a new world, the arena for a series of bloody spectacles that attracted the attention, the passions and the rapacities of all Europe. The hungry, greedy, belligerent powers of that day smelled gold and treasure and new territory—and did precisely as they have been doing ever since and probably always will do.

Since those dimly illumined days when Columbus discovered the West Indies, and with them new continents, then peopled with aborigines, a vast complex world has evolved. A world made up of inner worlds, passing through dizzy stages of violence and destruction, evolution and revolution; a world composed of elements foreign to their soil and clime; a kaleidoscopic world of all colors, designs and tendencies.

We wonder that some composer has not long since written a "Symphony of the Indies." They lend themselves so perfectly, with vibrations and variations of emotion that often descend to the pits of passion. Everywhere native harmonics with snatches of strange melody; something world-old and yet antiquely new in rhythm, striking new heights and reaches in pitch. Harmony may seem

## THE WEST INDIES

difficult at first with such seeming dissonance (but scarcely from the viewpoint of "modern music") until one realizes the living synchronization of the many encrustations of peoples, of nations, of civilizations dwelling together with no apparent primary discords. The infinite range: From the primeval native African voodoo musicalizations and expression of the black soul in pure folk song of traditional and unknown origin, in Haiti, with tom-tom accompaniment in unheard-of rhythm; the mellifluous and sensuous notes of India, in Trinidad and Demarara, to the Oriental throb of wedding drums; the French timbre variation, in Martinique and Guadeloupe, in keeping with the rich colors and grace of their black arrangement of Regency customs and costumes; the "Porgy" specters and aspects of St. Lucia, with religion-tortured natives singing a hymn to the tune of *A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight!* on a street corner in the garish light of flaming torches; rumbaized Spanish rhythms of Cuba, domesticated with musical sticks and gourds; Puerto Rico's reverberations of Black Harlem; another echo of Harlem in Nassau's local "mammy" doggerel. Through it all seep the strains of Palestrina of the Catholic Church grounded by Mother Spain, dignified hymning pouring from Anglican cathedrals and parish churches in the British Isles, sweet darky singing in the Moravian style in the Virgins. Varied obligatos in the undertones of jungle life and overtones of the vibrant native markets; the melodic street cries of Old San Juan; the whining winches of a hundred busy harbors, the grinding rumble of a thousand sugar mills. Here, there and everywhere, grace notes from the guitars and banjos of lone and lonely

boy ballad singers. So little exaltation; so seldom exultant. So much that is weird, wild and somber and mostly in a minor key. There is no actual repetition, except in the refrain of the tropics and a never-ending throb, like the brilliant drumbeat motif in Ravel's *Bolero*.

Such a symphony would be widely typical and broadly true to type. We must realize at this stage of our travels that the Indies and our other terrain have tremendously serious aspects of which we as chance visitors need never become an integral part; or that we need only be associated with in so far as a knowledge of them becomes essential to some sort of understanding and appreciation and ultimate enjoyment.

First, we must recognize that all the inhabitants today (except a negligible handful of aborigines) are aliens—victims of, or the progeny of, sometime invading foreigners. Homeless, in the national sense of the word—as we may well appreciate when we hear a white Jamaican, or other British West Indian, confide to us that someday he is going “home,” meaning to England, which neither he nor his father probably ever saw. One and all, black and white, are born in the islands with a subconscious feeling of nostalgia. Filled from birth with a spirit of uneasiness that periodically rises to a consciousness of impending disaster. Hordes of long-expatriated blacks, colonists clinging to threads and shreds of homeland traditions, travelers covertly glancing at some future date of departure, adventurers who are at heart waifs and strays. All somehow devoid of the high hope; their minds too often occupied with omens and threatened with ominous repetitions of seasonal adversity—earthquakes, volcanoes,

## THE WEST INDIES

hurricanes, tidal waves, backwash of ruling government, being sold out (as the Virgin Islanders were recently sold out by the Danes), recurrent revolution (as in Cuba, Santo Domingo, Haiti—self-governing islands), economic exclusion and starvation and, finally, the threatened black millennium. These inhibitions are not actually oppressive, they are seldom even noticeable, and the vast majority are not even conscious of anything more than an occasional anxiety. The logical cause for their presence lies inherently in the islands themselves, as also in the course of events and enterprises that influenced them since the first century of their discovery and usurpation.

The foremost native antagonist in the Indies is Nature. Paradoxically, Nature is man's greatest friend, the hero in every chapter in his life. His battle is always with Nature, that is always coddling him. Nature is over-generous everywhere, but likewise she is an exacting and crushing mistress. Nature, the Beautiful, the Poetic, the Lady Bountiful, the Lifegiver. But Nature is also the *dea ex machina* of the elements, the Devil and the Juggernaut Taker of Life. In her very magnificence and munificence, Nature is the deceiver. She seems to give everything free and freely, but actually allows only a primitive existence in exchange for the sacrifice of civilized living. While she is bountiful with her fruits, she is also prodigal with her clutching jungle and myriads of creatures with which man must continuously wrestle, or in a season the jungle and its creatures will conquer him. Without eternal vigilance and industry, the jungle will crawl in and reclaim as its heritage the spaces from which man tore it up and pushed it back to make his clearings



and cells of civilization. There is no compromise with civilization in these island tropics; it can never rest on its oars. The struggle is endless, the odds are against the white settler. There is always danger of the first generation getting provincial, of the second going native, of the native mixing with the black people and of the black people slipping back into the jungle. Profitable production, maintenance of type and white supremacy are preserved only at the expense of hard labor at low cost and the sustained keeping of self-respect.

We are still pursuing the why and the wherefore of the West Indian's concepts, behavior and attitudes toward life that will on first contact seem strange to our own by comparison, just as our own will seem strange to him. Once we have made his intimate acquaintance, more or less, we may dash about seeing the sights with increased understanding and pleasure.

Any prolonged stay in the tropics will soon apprise the visitor of another potent psychological influence, which like nearly all the others is in the day's work, and of which, therefore, he is practically unconscious. It is another form of the eternal struggle in the midst of too much plenty. Nature again in her magnificence and munificence; sensuous and passionate, violent and merciless. We must be prepared to find nothing in moderation, as we know it in our cool temperate zone. It never rains but it pours! The midday sun never shines but it broils, and it is deadly too, as we shall learn to our sorrow if we trifle with it once too often. At first, at least, everything will seem deadly. Defiance means defeat, by slow annihilation. That is why impatient northerners everywhere on the globe are irri-

## THE WEST INDIES

tated and become contemptuous of southerners—until they live in the South and learn. The blacks succeed best, for they are true children of the sun and the tropics. In their languor and so-called laziness they play Nature's game, carefree, without worry about tomorrow. By and large, they alone have survived unscathed.

It lies in man's nature to abhor a surfeit of anything. Just as the Scandinavians of the too-long dark winters, deprived of God's daylight for more than half the year, welcome, worship and revel in their short summer, so do these people of the perpetual sunshine revel in and worship the rainfall. The islands are surrounded on every hand by water; yet often during the fearful dry season, with water, water everywhere, there is not a drop to drink! We shall find the Virgin Islands the chief sufferers from these dreadful droughts, though practically all the islands have to be economical in the daily use of water.

Throughout the Indies, with a few exceptions, there are three basic, traditional and seemingly unalterable fibers that have ever been combined—yet never exactly intertwined—to make up the human fabric, facts and fiction concerning them. Three cultures, three civilizations, have gone into the composition of peoples that we fancy we see today. There is a fourth fiber which we may at first think should be considered most prominently of all: the nationality of the sovereign state by whom the once-alien natives have been adopted. But this plays a minor part, actually, in the intrinsic character of the people.

First, there are faint vestiges of the Indian aborigines—a reservation in Dominica, a vanishing family here and there, with considerable numbers of San Blas Indians in

## WHITE ELEPHANTS IN THE CARIBBEAN

Panama and local tribes in British Guiana and other continental South American towns that we shall visit—chiefly manifested through their characteristic handiworks and the more primitive practices in the bush and jungle. The second, toughest and most enduring fiber of them all is that of Spain. Wherever Spain settled, whether for a few years or a few centuries, her marks on man and land remain, though partially covered by succeeding peoples and their cultures. Third, the dusky cloud of Africa hangs over and partially obscures all. These hordes overrun the towns and file in perpetual procession over the countryside; their huts are in the foreground of every landscape; their jargon is the overwhelming voice by day, and theirs are the strange cries as of an enslaved people tossing in its sleep by night. Sooner or later white government officials, colonists and visitors must knuckle to the fact that the Indies in the main are a black man's land, and carry on accordingly. All must learn to respect the black man as somebody of importance in the Indies, or in time come to suffer for this lack of consideration.

One depressing fact is pitifully apparent; namely, the almost universal poverty prevailing among the majority of common black people in the islands; poor in dollars and cents, pounds and pence, yet rich in a carefree optimism, in a confidence in white paternalism and a childish hope that something may turn up tomorrow. They are a perpetual economic problem, and when we say "they" we mean literally them and their blessed islands. On closer acquaintance, the White Elephants of the Caribbean turn out to be Black Elephants of the West Indies!

Practically all social life among the black masses is car-

## THE WEST INDIES

ried on in the three principal community gathering places: The Market Place—to which we find them wending their way over hill and dale all through the night, carrying head-baskets often heavier than they could lift, and from daylight on keenly enjoying a rich feast of bartering with a few coppers in profit. (Just listen to one of their markets sometime!) The Water Hole—sometimes two miles distant from their homes, whither they carry forty pounds of water in a Socony can atop their heads; or the spring where they do their washing—where they gabble for hours, and no woman's tea party ever enjoyed itself more, gossiped harder or laughed louder. The Field of Labor—where mixed companies of men and women work, often twelve hours at a time, seven days a week; not killing themselves perhaps, but working and seeming somehow to get a good time out of it. These are the mainsprings of black life in the West Indies, that keep body and soul together, through which they live and have their being.

Every island and mainland that we shall visit has had a checkered history. Practically every one of them, at one or more times during the past, enjoyed its princely period of prosperity. Compared with those spans of majesty or luxury, these are poor times indeed; yet the sight of their ruins spread over the face of the landscape inspires more thrills and interest, romantic and historic, than their presence probably would have done. The ubiquitous ruins are of ancient, and some modern, sugar estates. Their gaunt presence everywhere indicates that the Mississippi Bubble must have been trifling in comparison with that will-o'-the-wisp of the Indies—Sugar. The one-time splendor in which dwelt the early whites is

## WHITE ELEPHANTS IN THE CARIBBEAN

fast decaying, as has the glory of Spain, with whom much of it was linked. It is true not only of Spain, but also of the pomp and power of Europe and the Old World—all are vanishing like an earlier civilization which they once caused to crumble. It is all crumbling too, going native, if you will, back to the jungle, from whose people it was raped.

Ever since we Americans became travel-minded and tourist-conscious, the West Indies have lain at our feet unnoticed in the main by the great traveling public. For more than half a century Europe and the Grand Tour were the thing to do. This was right and proper, for Europe offers not merely a banquet of travel delicacies and luxuries, but also a table spread with tourist commodities to suffice for a lifetime. True, Europe is the home of our ancestors and the seat of our culture. Our desire to visit and to see with our own eyes these shrines and treasures was laudable. However, there are other claims upon our touristic loyalty. We are denizens of the New World, citizens of a new country, entirely of our own conception and making, independent of Europe and our mother country. Our world has its own beginnings, its grand exploits and mighty figures and historical dates, all beginning with the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, October 12, 1492. We have erected statues to Columbus, named innumerable towns for him and set aside a national holiday to celebrate his fortuitous discovery of our Americas. Countless and varied changes have taken place since "Columbus sailed the ocean blue in fourteen hundred ninety-two." The majority of these events that in some

## THE WEST INDIES

small or large measure have contributed to our American history and had some bearing on the exploration and development of our continent, and later on the struggles of the thirteen colonies that led to the formation of our United States, began in the West Indies.

In fact, our initial history began and for many years flourished in the Indies alone.

Turning to our books of reference, we find Columbus persisting in his belief that the earth was not flat and that India could be reached by sailing over the horizon into unknown and uncharted seas. With the superstition-ridden crews of his three tiny caravels half-crazed with fear, short of water and provisions, hope vanishing into mists of despair, after a voyage of seventy dreadful days and nights, Christopher Columbus and eighty-seven fellows bumped—accidentally, one might almost say—into a tiny island that stood in their pathway to India. He named the land San Salvador and claimed it with pomp and ostentation for their Catholic Majesties of Castile and León! Because of its incalculable contribution to world history, this spot and event should be marked by one of the greatest monuments in the world. Instead, the British now call it Watling Island! Ship after ship passes it almost without comment. A few passengers perhaps bestir themselves to gaze at one of the most barren of the 3,000 Bahama Islands, or at that stretch of sandy beach where Columbus, clad in a velvet doublet, accompanied by cross and flag, stood waist-deep in the surf.

As we know the West Indian archipelago today, with its literally countless isles and islets, it has a total area of more than 90,000 miles. It is divided generally into two

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groups: the Greater Antilles and the Lesser Antilles. The Greater Antilles comprise about four-fifths of the entire area and include the northern islands of the Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti (Santo Domingo), Puerto Rico. The Lesser Antilles—the “Little West Indies,” as they are often called—include a string of smaller islands, swinging round in a bow between Puerto Rico and the northern coast of Venezuela. These latter are divided into two groups. The Leeward Islands: St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John—the Virgin Islands; St. Kitts, Montserrat, Antigua and Dominica—British islands; Guadeloupe and Martinique—French islands; and St. Martin—jointly in possession of France and the Netherlands. The Windward Islands: St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada, Barbados and Trinidad—all British (with which is linked, in government, British Guiana on the northern coast of South America).

We have been prone to consider “West Indies” as a generic term, which might be broadly treated, disposing of the islands as a whole as though each island were just another cell in a vast archipelago body. This holds true externally only, and even then not specifically, for each of these island cells is actually a distinct entity. There is a marked tropical family resemblance, but beyond that there is the same differentiation as exists between and among families, each member of which has his own individuality, constitution, mentality and temperament. This becomes apparent once we get down to the family, or little, life of the islands, which is really the big life. Occasionally one may detect strongly marked characteristics, customs and tendencies overlapping on one or more near

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neighbors—like, for example, the charming Empire dress and headdress of the French islands being adopted in St. Lucia, Barbados and even Trinidad.

We Americans rediscovered the West Indies and began following in the wake of Columbus and the high adventurers in the nineteen-twenties, under peculiar and not particularly complimentary auspices. Prohibition and a rebellious thirst for rum and freedom sent us to the Indies in droves. However, America at large did discover the Indies, and we have been going back in ever-increasing numbers. There is a growing conviction that no American traveler can afford to miss the West Indies!





## Chapter Two

### SPANISH EMPIRE IN THE INDIES

*Romance Begins—Discoverers and Conquistadors—The  
Gunpowder Ring of Envy—World Picture—Birth of a  
New Era—France, England, the Netherlands—New Arena  
of History—Greed for Gold—Columbus Alive and Dead—  
England's Rise to Power over Spain and France*

ROMANCE begins.

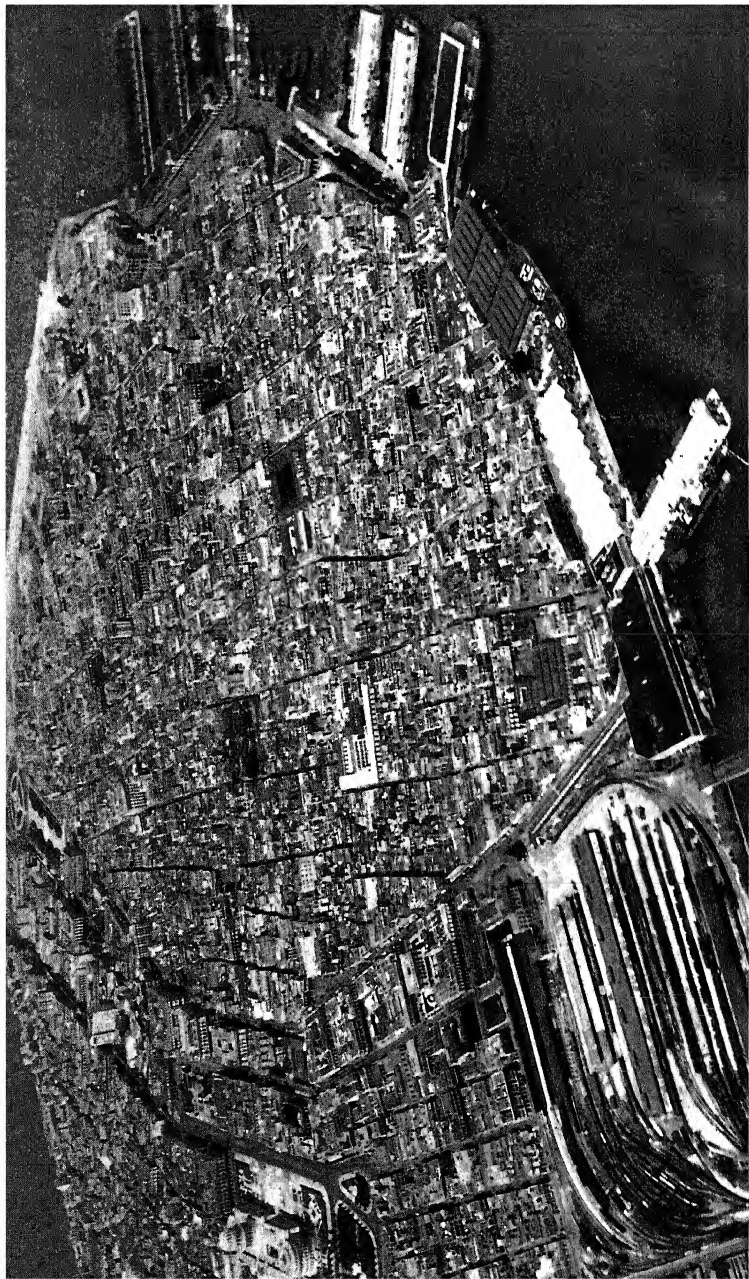
Not only romance in the Indies, but a romantic interlude for the then ruling world. America burst like a rocket in the beclouded medieval heavens, illuminating the darkness of a tired and effete old world with the bright prospect and promise of a brand-new world, that for the next two hundred years swirled round the West Indies.

In order to gauge the full importance of America's discovery and the reasons for the dramatic shift of scene and momentous drift westward of world attention, hopes and struggle, it becomes expedient to make a brief outline of Europe's conditions and plight near the dawn of the sixteenth century.

England's power seemed on the wane when in 1450 she lost Normandy and the foothold on the Continent that



Sugar is cultivated most everywhere in the West Indies and a stick of sugar cane has never been displaced by the lollypop for the native sweet-tooth.



Modern Havana, that gem of the Caribbean, is here seen in its harbor setting and its array of boulevards, parks and plazas. It is the one truly modern metropolis of the American tropics.

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she had so valiantly gained in the Joan of Arc era. The year 1485 saw the conclusion of the Wars of the Roses; thirty years of murder and pillage, plunder and demoralization, that left the country on the verge of ruin. Upon this scene appeared Henry VII, the first Tudor, with nothing to boast of but a bloody escutcheon. And little island England began to realize that her future lay in conquest on the sea and discoveries beyond it. For a brief season we find England making the mistake of allying herself with the mightiest power of the day, the kingdom of Ferdinand and Isabella.

In France, Louis XI increased his power through a corrupt and ruinous policy. By the extinction of its male line, in 1477, Burgundy became a part of his kingdom. A decade later, under Louis XII, the country became involved in bloody wars in Italy, but all gains finally had to be handed over to Ferdinand the Catholic. To balance this, France's power on the sea must be maintained at all costs.

Spain approached the zenith of her European power when she captured Granada, expelling the last of the Moors, and united Castile and Aragon under the joint rule of Ferdinand and Isabella. Spain became mistress of the seas and the Number 1 power of the earth. Her glory increased in a rapid succession of favorable events. Columbus discovered America and took possession of it in her name, in 1492. In 1494, Maximilian I, Emperor of Germany, became regent for his son Philip, who in 1496 married Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. And in 1500 was born the future Charles V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and King of Spain (1500-1558),

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including Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain. Spain was riding high and handsome—and cruelly.

However, there were occurring other epochal events—on a par with the discovery of America—that would in time make quite another world out of Europe, intellectually and spiritually at least. In 1453, Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turks. It was the end of Eastern influence in Europe and speeded along the Renaissance that had been born in Italy a century earlier. It marked the transition from one historical age to another. When, in 1494, Charles VIII opened Italy to French, German and Spanish interference, the Renaissance spread rapidly northward; 1483 marked the birth of Martin Luther, and early in the 1500's the Reformation came and divided the civilized world into armed camps; 1522 saw the invention of printing. The center of gravity was shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, and the new world, that belonged with and to America, was born.

From first to last, their Most Catholic Majesties, the Kings of Spain, championed the Latin races, the papacy and the church. Automatically, this made Protestant Netherlands and newly reformed England, under Henry VIII, implacable enemies of Spain. France, though Catholic, was bent upon her own protection, ends and ambitions, and was common enemy to them all when it suited their and her purpose. Thus, their countries torn and more than half ruined by wars, their coffers empty, the four great maritime powers of the day—Catholic Spain and France, Protestant England and the Netherlands—plunged into the West Indies and began a deadly struggle that lasted for more than three centuries.

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Being the first discoverer, Spain had the advantage from the outset. All four combatants were consumed with a greed for gold, treasure and new lands that smears history with as disgraceful an assortment of foul deeds and general inhumanities as any other period can blush for. And yet, though their deeds were too often unmentionable and the fabric of them soiled with murder, massacre and treachery, there run through them fine gold threads of individual heroism, personal bravery and massed courage unexcelled in history; of mingled heroism and villainy, that has won a place in the annals of high romance. New World history began, as all history has begun, with romance. Romance surrounded its conception, its deeds and achievements. Mysterious and supernatural events intermingled strangely with God and gold. The real stories are scarcely more believable than the invented tales; there was a blending of the heroic and the marvelous, the mysterious and the purely imaginative. Love and woman scarcely, if ever, entered in. It was a man's world of devil-may-care and derring-do, life for life, with a violent death almost inevitable; a fanciful paraphrase of all former experience that set the mind of the superstitious Middle Ages agog.

On his first voyage, Columbus discovered and landed at Cuba and Haiti, or Hispaniola, as it was then called, in addition to San Salvador which has never been considered of any further importance. His second expedition was far more pretentious and consisted of three galleons and fourteen caravels, having on board fifteen hundred men, including twelve missionaries. The Admiral was directed to endeavor by every means in his power to Chris-

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tianize the inhabitants of the islands, to "honor them much" and to "treat them well and lovingly," under pain of severe punishment. He arrived again in his Indies on November 3, 1493, and added to his discoveries Dominica, Marie-Galante and Guadeloupe, Montserrat, Antigua, San Martin, Santa Cruz (St. Croix) and the Virgin Islands, landing at the island of Puerto Rico, which he named San Juan Bautista. He revisited Hispaniola, made his headquarters there. On his way to Cuba he discovered Jamaica, which he called Santiago. La Mona was the next discovery, where he became ill. Columbus remained three years on the island of Hispaniola, during which period he sent off five shiploads of Indians to Seville to be sold as slaves. The annihilation of the aborigines had begun. Columbus was received at the court of Spain and loaded with honors and riches. His third voyage was in 1498. He had made a vow to name the first-sighted land Trinidad, in honor of the Trinity, and the island bearing that name was thus discovered. On this voyage he caught his only sight of the mainland of South America, which he considered but another island. En route back to Hispaniola he sighted Tobago, Grenada and Margarita. Sixty million reales' worth of gold were mined on the island of Hispaniola, and the outpouring of American treasure began in earnest. But Columbus, now in disfavor with the Spanish court, was recalled; he was taken back to Spain in irons, charged with cruelty to the Indians. He was exonerated, and made his fourth voyage in 1502 but was not permitted to visit beloved Hispaniola. When he returned to Spain in 1504, his sovereigns refused to give him an audience. He finally died, alone and brokenhearted, on May 20,

1506. He bequeathed all he had to his son, Diego, whose house we shall visit in Santo Domingo City (now Trujillo City). Columbus' remains were transferred from Valladolid to Seville. In 1542, the remains of both The Admiral—which was the title given him—and Diego were removed to the Cathedral in Santo Domingo City. In 1796, after Hispaniola had been ceded to the French, Columbus' remains were transferred to Havana, whence, after the loss of Cuba in 1898, they were transferred back to Seville. However, around that supposed circumstance rages a controversy that has shaken two continents. The Dominicans bring forth what seems indisputable documentary evidence to prove that an error was made in the disinterment; that it was not the remains of Christopher Columbus that were removed, but those of Diego, his son, and that Columbus still remains in the West Indies, which he discovered!

Our histories contain the complete records of those who followed Columbus and the discoveries they made. We shall visit the majority of these islands. Spain discovered, claimed, named and settled an amazing number of them. This was part of her ambitious scheme of world empire, which was spreading, through the rapid and heroic exploits and explorations of the Conquistadors, into South and Central America and working northward, eventually to lay claim to Mexico, what is now Florida and Texas, plus the border states of the Southwest and a vast undefined territory that they claimed when Cabrillo penetrated into California in 1542.

Gold and silver, precious stones and slaves, began to flow into the marts and coffers of Spain. She became more



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and more arrogant in her omnipotence. She increased her conquests, built ever more and greater ships.

Spain's European antagonists and rivals were stirred to their depths, but no more by fear than by envy. They were infuriated by Spain's claim to the entire New World and set out with determination, deliberation and bare-faced audacity to wrest at least part of it from her grasp, in a ship-to-ship and hand-to-hand struggle that each year grew in ferocity and ruthlessness. The Spaniards held unchecked sway for more than a century, when they began to lose ground, bit by bit, island by island, and to reduce the area in self-defense. It was not until the middle of the seventeenth century, however, that Spain gave up her claim to the exclusive possession of the archipelago. Four definite causes contributed substantially to this circumstance: First, the islands did not prove to be Eldorado, brimming over with gold, silver and precious stones, as had been expected. We shall be faced by this important and disappointing fact at every turn in the Indies. Second, Spain was preyed upon too overwhelmingly by her bellicose European enemies, then successively by buccaneers, pirates and privateers. Third, her empire had become too vast and far-flung to be defended and maintained by a single small nation. Finally, her dreams of avarice were being realized in the plunder of the ancient civilizations of the Aztecs and Incas and plunging ever deeper into the more important mainlands.

The pivot of all activities, expeditions and personalities continued in the islands for some time to come, however. Christopher Columbus had made his headquarters in Hispaniola, and several of the most famous Spaniards had

either followed him there or succeeded him. Diego Columbus was, in 1509, made Admiral of the Indies and also appointed Governor of Hispaniola, ruling from the palace whose well-preserved ruins we shall see later on. Cortez sailed from Santo Domingo City to Cuba, where he lived for some time near Santiago. In 1519, he pushed over into Mexico, where he founded Vera Cruz, thence on to Mexico City and the conquest of the country, which included the betrayal of Montezuma, the general massacre of natives, and yielded treasure enough to fill galleons for years and to furnish lucrative sport for enemy sea marauders. Balboa, then a prisoner in Santo Domingo, escaped in a barrel on an expeditionary ship sailing for the Isthmus of Panama. On landing, he thrust aside the appointed leader and with a handful of soldiers fought his way to the other side and so discovered the Pacific Ocean. Pizarro, the illegitimate son of a Spanish officer, was a member of the Balboa party. It was then that he first heard of the fabulous Country of Gold, the Inca Empire. In Santo Domingo he first concocted the scheme of the conquest of the Incas, which he put into execution by sailing from Panama in 1524. We may also find in Santo Domingo the ruins of the first college, that of Las Casas, Apostle to the Indians, a contemporary of Columbus and Cortez.

Spain's tenure in the great majority of the islands had begun to wane by the beginning of the seventeenth century. She concentrated her power and possessions in governing and cultivating three of the larger and more promising of the Indies—Trinidad (which the British did not wrest from her until 1797); and Cuba and Puerto Rico,

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which Spain lost in the Spanish-American War, in 1898. Curiously enough, the large, rich island of Hispaniola lying between her two main West Indian possessions, and used as headquarters during the first few decades, was abandoned after scarcely a struggle to the disorderly rule of freebooters and buccaneers.

For the better part of three centuries, the Indies and surrounding waters reflected in a greater or a lesser degree the ferocious and unabated struggles that rocked and ruined the European mother countries. The individual fortunes and misfortunes of Spain and France, the Netherlands and England, their waning or growing strength, their rise or fall, down to the present day, may be clearly traced in the history of the West Indies. Here, likewise, we may see some of the most potent currents that deeply affected the stream of history of our United States. To the tourists alive to their historical backgrounds, a tour of the Indies becomes a romantic and dramatic travelogue.

Within our territories proper white supremacy begins with the discovery of Florida, in 1513. Twenty years later Cortez penetrated to California, and by 1540 Coronado's expedition had spanned southwestern United States. Less than eighty years after the death of Columbus we see the English rising to that power which eventually took forcible possession of the entire northern continent, beginning with the first English colony in Virginia, toward the end of the sixteenth century, followed by the more permanent one at Jamestown, in 1607. Henry Hudson, in the service of the Dutch, took possession of New York Bay, as we know it, two years later, and Manhattan Island was settled in 1614. Fifty years later we find

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the English occupying New Amsterdam, precisely at the time they are at war with the Netherlands. But England's star on the sea had begun to rise toward supremacy, and Spain's to fall, when the Spanish Armada was destroyed in 1588. However, England's period of world supremacy was still far off, for at the beginning of the eighteenth century France was generally acknowledged to be the most formidable power in Europe, which was mirrored in the Americas. About this time Louis XIV of France and William III of England made a treaty that discussed terms for disposing of the crown and possessions of Spain! At the same moment the French had taken a firm foothold in Louisiana. But less than two decades later France was being forced to give up Acadia and Newfoundland, and England was taking rapid steps toward naval and colonial supremacy. The whole of Canada was ceded to England in 1763. And only seven years later came the Boston Massacre, that led to the defeat of England by the thirteen American colonies, and the beginning of a new empire in the Americas. In a little more than 150 years this new power has risen to first place in world affairs. So unstable are the power and glory of nations and their conquests.

America contributed, in more ways than one, the elements that raised Spain to preëminence among her contemporaries. Also, it was Spain's own West Indian offspring who revolted in the latter days of that empire and wounded her, while those Anglo-North Americans, who have usurped the name "Americans," which they created, administered the deathblow, giving freedom to Cuba and taking Puerto Rico over for better or for worse.

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So we complete the cycle begun in the Indies. Beginning with Spain in actual possession of an empire vaster and richer than that of Greece or Rome, we have seen France rise to the top in maritime power and New World possessions. Gradually England became supreme, almost forcing Spain and France out of the Indies and the North American continent and adding those immense territories to the British Empire, "upon which the sun never sets." And finally out of this potpourri, begun by a passing Genoese adventurer and dreamer who was thought to be crazy when he was halfheartedly commissioned by the King of Spain to seek a western passage to India, has emerged a new nation—"Columbia, the gem of the ocean!" An undreamed-of United States of America, that has outstripped the nations of Europe who gave her birth and culture. Not a single island or seaport or square foot of land or fathom of sea remains to Spain of that once-glorious New World empire. Her united enemies not only conquered, they annihilated her!



### Chapter Three

## BLACK IVORY AND WHITE GOLD

*Physical Superiority of Negroes over Indians—Slave Labor  
Introduced—Sugar Cultivation—Machine versus Man—  
Competition and Depression*

FINALLY, to understand what is right and what is wrong with the Indies, and to bridge the otherwise hopeless abyss that separates our continental world from the isles of the Caribbean, two all-important preliminary considerations remain. Their world and our world have, in the large, widely separate civilizations that give distinctive psychological aspects by which every thought, word and deed is colored. Ours is a white man's land; the West Indies, to an astonishing degree, are black. Any successful visit, appreciation or relationship must be measured by an acknowledgment, an understanding of, and a sympathy with, this underlying circumstance.

Figuratively speaking, we may say that there are about ten million black and colored persons in the West Indies. A perfect and complete census of all-whites is difficult because of the widespread mixture. The proportion of blacks to whites runs all the way from ten thousand to one, in Haiti, to one to three, in Puerto Rico.

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The blacks are of pure African stock; needless to say, none was found on the islands when they were discovered. There were several million aboriginal Indians, however. Taken together with the fact that the islands were not made of gold and silver—as several of the countries on the mainland practically proved to be—these aborigines were a disappointment from the first. In some instances the natives were cannibals; with a few exceptions, they were bellicose, disputing the foreign invasion of their territories and rights, until they were killed off to a man. Contacts with civilization led to the extinction of all but a few hundred who have weathered the centuries. The greatest disappointment, though, was caused by the fact that as a race the Caribs had neither the guts nor the stamina of the good all-around black slave. They died off rapidly under the lash and overwork. So, through one cruel cause or another, within a couple of generations the colonists found themselves without the primary essential to their tenure of their new-found land—labor. Maintenance and development, subsistence and defense, depended upon limitless labor.

The use of captive Africans as slaves had come into prominence just shortly before the New World labor predicament arose. Only fifty years before America's discovery, the Portuguese had from time to time taken Moors captive. The Moors could be redeemed by payments of gold. On one occasion part payment was made in African blacks. After this there was such a demand for black slaves at home that a large number of ships were fitted out solely for this trade. The crews made settlements along the African coast, built forts and then raided the

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natives. The first black slaves brought to the Indies were descendants of these blacks in Spain, and the first slaves were taken to the island of Hispaniola in 1502. By 1517 each Spanish resident of Hispaniola was eligible for a license to import ten black slaves. Soon after, a license was granted in a single instance, to a middleman, to supply four thousand negroes annually to Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica and Puerto Rico. Thus the slave trade was first systematized between Africa and America, with the Portuguese in control.

Undue blame for the promotion of slavery is not to be laid at the door of the Portuguese, however. The profits derived from this traffic became so great that, one by one, all nations became smeared with the tarbrush. Special slave hulks were constructed to carry "black ivory." The ordinary deck room or cargo space was divided into three tiers or galleries, with only a few feet headroom. Selected healthy specimens of negroes, both male and female, were manacled to the decks in fairly close formation and given all the consideration of valuable livestock on a long voyage. Insufferable heat, scurvy and other causes brought about a high mortality, often numbering one-sixth of a shipload of six hundred. The money loss was considerable, at seventy-five to one hundred fifty dollars a head.

Sir John Hawkins, the naval hero and freebooter, was the first Englishman to engage in the slave traffic, carrying cargoes of slaves from Africa to the West Indies and the Spanish Main. Several English noblemen and Queen Elizabeth herself, so it was said, had a financial interest in these ventures. For a time, England's slave trade was in the hands of exclusive companies but later it was made



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free to all subjects of the crown. A lucrative contract to supply Spanish colonies with 4,800 slaves annually passed from Dutch to French and finally fell into British hands. Within twenty years following 1680, 140,000 negroes were exported by the African Company, and 160,000 more by private adventurers. Within the next century, 600,000 were transported to Jamaica alone; the total import into the British colonies of America and the West Indies was 2,130,000. Owing, in some measure probably, to her gradual acquisition of most of the West Indian islands within the century that followed, Britain became the chief trafficker in this commerce of human beings, the trade reaching its peak just prior to the Revolutionary War. At that time, 192 slavers hailing from London, Liverpool, Lancaster and Bristol provided transport for about 48,000 negroes. About the year 1790, 74,000 slaves were imported, the traffic being divided as follows: British, 38,000; French, 20,000; Portuguese, 10,000; Dutch, 4,000; Danes, 2,000. Thus it may be seen that every "civilized" white maritime nation was engaged in the lucrative business of black ivory, in proportion to their shipping capacity. New England, then the shipping center of the North American continent, was proportionately involved. Then, after three hundred years of this most profitable trade, slave traffic was outlawed by the English Parliament in 1811. In 1833 the practice of slavery was abolished in the West Indies, although the law did not go into general effect until 1838. Those who believe in a law of compensation, for three hundred years of the unspeakable atrocities committed by whites upon blacks, may point to our Civil War as at least part retribution. That may not be the end, as

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a deeper consideration of the West Indian problem of white and black elephants may suggest.

A single visit to nearly any part of the West Indies should make a traveler pause to think, the next time a tea hostess at home makes the seemingly trivial remark: "Sugar? One lump—or two?" Sugar, the white gold of the West Indies, is at the bottom of practically every really important circumstance and phase in the history of the islands subsequent to their discovery. Slavery and rum, war and pillage for possession, progress and riches, poverty and decay—all, more or less directly, may be laid at the magic door of sugar.

Sugar-cane cultivation was introduced first in Hispaniola—in 1494, to be exact. This sugar trade expanded with such rapidity that, from the dues levied on its import, Charles V obtained sufficient funds for his palace building at Madrid and Toledo! Sugar was next cultivated in Cuba, which has become the outstanding example of what sugar can mean in the lives and fortunes of men and nations, in its rise to the title of "Sugar Bowl of the World." The French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique then undertook its cultivation. The English Barbados did not begin until 1641, the neighboring islands rapidly following suit. This caused an immediate boom in the slave trade. So, we return to our pivotal point—labor. The fortunes of the Indies always have depended, and always will depend, on labor. Today there is a surplus throughout the islands, owing to two unavoidable causes, and no relief whatsoever is promised so long as the modern industrial and economic system shall last.

Labor has always rended and rendered the islands to

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the varied uses of the "civilized" whites. Labor made their colorful romance a colored reality. Labor created one of the most horrific eras in the history of the human race. It produced the wealth that more than once filled the empty coffers of an effete civilization; its victims like rotting manure gave the worn-out European social soil a rejuvenation and a renaissance. To all this reflorescence, seemingly so good and beautiful, we—especially we Americans—owe the black man an everlasting debt. Without him, the Indies might well have conquered the Conquistadors and gone back to their primeval jungle state. The early Spaniards killed off the aborigines in unsuccessful labor and would just as readily—in some instances the British actually did—use white serfs in a superhuman effort to wrest the latent riches from the soil. None had the pitiable endurance, however, of the enslaved black man. He alone turned the trick and saved the Indies for white prosperity and posterity.

It is interesting to note that the West Indies' economic débâcle bears a close resemblance to what happened to the rest of the world following the World War, although preceding it by the matter of a century at least. To a large extent, the causes were of the same general nature, with the same inevitable result—the proficiency of the machine; the gradual approach and culmination of the Machine Age, that at first brought greater and greater profit to the employers of labor. There followed a period of seeming benefit to the laborer himself, as the hours of his labor were more and more shortened, and many of the hardest operations actually performed for him. Imperceptibly he was robbed,

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however, of initiative, invention, pride and interest in his individual labor as an artisan, the machine gradually swallowing up the individual laborer altogether and creating a mass of robots destined to weld all their former might of brawn into a mighty brute force that has come to threaten the present state of society, whether for good or for ill remains to be seen. An obvious corollary remains, in that the great bulk of mankind was created to toil and labor. Minus this toilsome and all-engaging occupation, the human machine, like all others, begins to rust and its disengaged energy begins to get into mischief. Thus the humanitarian blessings of the machine are sometimes lost by robbing the laboring masses of their worthiest expression. He that slights and looks upon the individual job with contempt comes at length to make a faultless idol and an almighty god of abstract massed labor. In time, we find the machine becoming a curse, senselessly crushing both greedy capitalist exploiters and once-proud laborers.

Every mother's son among us is in some small or large way a victim in these days of toilless troubles, wherein the machine has usurped the honest toil and sweat and then turned on us by overproducing all things, literally starving and smothering us with plenty while half the world has nothing to do save angrily to turn on its inventors for recompense. When labor will have seized the profits and squandered them, then the ignorant and enraged masses will rise and begin to take it out of their hides—just as capital once took it out of theirs. Meanwhile, the machine goes on and on like a juggernaut.

Now, all this world mass movement and psychology

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has found more than fertile soil among the black hordes of the Indies, owing largely to inherent and inherited causes.

First, these black people were brought to the islands in such great numbers to harvest what was at that time the world's richest crop—sugar. With unlimited supply, the world's consumption of sugar grew in leaps and bounds. The manufacture of huge quantities of rum, of course, had something to do with this. ~~Great~~ Britain, for example, consumed 10,000 tons of sugar in 1700; in 1800, 150,000 tons; in 1885, the total quantity was estimated at one million one hundred thousand tons. Treasuries grew rich from the proceeds of West Indian sugar. Cane fields covered half the area of the islands, it would seem. European capitalists invested huge sums that always yielded gilt-edged profits. Individual planters lived like Indian princes on their vast "estates," each with its complement of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of negro slaves or laborers. Half a dozen potbellied windmills, tall, well-made brick chimneys and spacious sugar factories could be seen on any horizon. Sugar and blacks were omnipresent.

Presto! Necessity added another child to her large family of inventions when Europe was blockaded by Napoleon. Although sugar had been "invented" a dozen years before, through the scientific discovery of common sugar in beetroot, it did not become a component part of agriculture and industry until the West Indies became inaccessible. After the downfall of Napoleon, the beetroot sugar industry languished until after 1830. By 1840 the process and product had been so improved that the production advanced with giant strides, and the death

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knell of West Indian prosperity could be faintly heard. As long ago as 1910, the production of beetroot sugar in the temperate zones of European countries had risen to six million tons. That of cane sugar in the West Indies had fallen to two million five hundred thousand tons.

The modern machine, however, was even more cruel to the West Indies and its rich hoard of white gold. The competition of beetroot sugar drove half the planters to an early ruin, while those who remained in the field were compelled to supplant their antique mills and machinery with entirely new equipment, which changed and improved from year to year with pitiless rapidity. The pursuit of the will-o'-the-wisp sugar began anew, but in a modern way. The Ford-minded Americans entered the field. Less acreage, fewer oxen and beasts of burden, less man power and more steam and electricity were used, production was speeded up, and the price went down and down until it was cheaper to throw the sugar into the sea than to produce any more of it.

Today, those most lovely tropical islands in the world that (whatever else may be true of them) offer more in the way of beautiful and varied scenery, more of romance and history made intimate, more of panoramic human interest and natural wonders and phenomena, more shipboard adventuring to delight either serious traveler or the passing tourist, than any other similar group, are the most gorgeous white elephants—of sugar and spice!



## Chapter Four

### THE CRADLE OF THE AMERICAS— SANTO DOMINGO

*Improvements—The Tomb of Columbus—Other Memorials  
of the Discoverer—The New City—A Modern Dictator—  
Luxury and Labor on a Sugar Plantation—Black Poet and  
Pacifist—Magic View from the Air—Interviewing the Pres-  
ident*

WE are off on our journey without benefit of compass through the blessed isles, the seas of high adventure and their neighboring romantic shores. It seems auspicious to begin our explorations by following in the watery wake of Christopher Columbus and to discover for ourselves—some four and a half centuries later—the first island of importance that he discovered and learned to love, which he made his headquarters and where, as seems fitting, he should be brought to rest forever.

Like Columbus, at dawn we sight a strange tropical coast line. This is the far end of the large island of Haiti—Hispaniola, as it was first known. Santo Domingo, or the Dominican Republic, occupies more than two-thirds of the island; the whole eastern end. We nose our way into a natural harbor. We have landed many times since,

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but our first landing was made from a large steamer which had to lie outside; we were taken off by tenders that bobbed like corks, rising and falling sometimes ten feet with the unrestrained tide. This has been remedied, however, by building a mile-long mole and breakwater simultaneously with the dredging of the harbor to enable ships of thirty-foot draft to dock. Our little Bull Line *Catherine*—like Columbus' three caravels, that were one-twentieth its size—steams its way to the wharf.

We had expected more of Santo Domingo City—more of what, we cannot decide for the first hour. More of a Spanish city, perhaps, and less of budding modernity. Modern dredges half block the harbor, a hundred concrete mixers and a thousand workers are finishing off a breakwater that smacks of the best work of the Machine Age; the wharf itself is steel and concrete and scarcely has an equal throughout the Indies. Cranes, derricks, drills and pile drivers are of the latest type. Efficient, costly, modern construction is going on in a half dozen places. Already we can feel the pressure of a powerful personality behind all this—and not that of Columbus.

Having bags and intending to stay awhile, we pass through a rigorous customs inspection, supervised by the U.S.A., which takes this as one of its means to satisfy the interest on a debt dating from Occupation days. And we have to pay a tax of six dollars because we are not a transient tourist. The two irritants cause us to enter Columbus' city a little resentfully. It wears off, however, within the next half hour, when we find ourselves in one of the most significant edifices in the world—to Ameri-



cans at least. This is the Cathedral of Santo Domingo, the foundation of which was laid four and a half centuries ago. The building is unimpressive externally, but the interior possesses a haunting Old World loveliness that is made somewhat abashed and shrinking by the presence of the rather ostentatious white baldachino that rises high above the remains of Columbus. On the right of the high altar, at the end of a nave grandly supported by tall columns, is the vault from which the supposed remains of the Discoverer were removed. Loving cathedrals, we lingered long among its dozen chapels, baptistery, tombs, and finally inspected the treasury of gold-embroidered robes and silver church utensils, gazed at the Velasquez and Murillo, and then returned to pause before the urned relics of Christopher Columbus. No American traveler in Santo Domingo should rest until he has paid his respects before this tomb.

Outside, in the plaza, stands a bronze statue of Columbus, with an Indian girl crouching at his feet—the same Anacaona who was hanged by Ovando near this spot. From here we can see the cannonball lodged in the wall of the cathedral by the guns of Sir Francis Drake, in his naval assault on the city.

Columbus is here, after all, we feel exultingly, after our first keen disappointment. For the time being, we ignore the Santo Domingo City that it has become. We hasten back downgrade to the waterfront and pass with reverence through the old gate, noting for the first time that this is still a walled city. It is but a stone's throw to the House of Columbus, a gloomy ruin of huge blocks of stone, the remains of the palace of Diego, son of Christopher, Co-

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lumbus. Its imposing dimensions, especially its two fine Romanesque doorways, suggest its former magnificence. Next, the Columbus Tower, or Castle, the oldest fortification of its kind in the Americas. We had seen it guarding the entrance of the harbor. Here we are shown the cell in which Columbus was enchained before being taken a prisoner back to Spain. According to historians, his prison was in another fortress across the river. It was near enough to the truth for us, however, and we actually could see before us Columbus bowed under his chains.

The huge trunk of the ceiba, or silk-cotton, tree to which Columbus anchored his vessels, still stands, near the landing stage—somewhat neglected, we thought. There remain many old churches and convents. San Nicolas was erected by Governor Ovando in 1509, in propitiation for his many sins and atrocities, among which were horrible massacres of Indians, the execution of Anacaona and the oppression of Columbus. Across the river still stands the Rosario Chapel, now used for storage on a sugar estate, which Columbus once attended in which his disgrace was proclaimed. The once-famous Convent of San Francisco, though partially in ruins, is now used as an insane asylum. In the narrower streets of the commercial section of the town there are countless suggestions of Spain, but little is left of that sixteenth-century Spanish city that shone with all the glories that belonged to the mother country. The huddled narrow streets of this small area alone proclaim the fortified medieval town within whose walls the population constantly sought refuge. Aside from the fact that Santo Domingo is the outstanding shrine-city of and for all the Americas, it still holds

enough remains and relics to interest all serious-minded American travelers.

Interest in Santo Domingo only begins there, however. Siege and fire, earthquake, hurricane and age have failed to rob it of its appearance of antiquity and medieval charm. Its own checkered republican career and its tropical setting have added values that set it apart from other metropolises of the Indies. And, at this writing, it is undergoing another phase that in itself makes it a worth-while city to visit, even by the most jaded tourist.

This new era began practically with the almost total destruction of Santo Domingo City by the hurricane of September, 1930. A few weeks prior to this disaster a new president had been elected, Brigadier General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina. The ruin and havoc, prostration and desolation that confronted the little republic would have daunted and discouraged any but a man of extraordinary caliber. It was a fitting test for the mettle of Trujillo. Unsettled and chaotic conditions aided in the making of the dictator which, it is obvious, he had from the first set out to become. Within half a dozen years he not only has made himself a tropical Mussolini, but also he has accomplished, in a smaller way and in the same amazing manner and degree, unbelievable and drastic reforms, improvements and public works on a grand scale and miraculously within the means, it seems, of his treasury, which have made him an outstanding governing figure in both hemispheres.

One has but to picture the scene following the hurricane. With the exception of the Old World buildings mentioned, the city was a heap of débris with hundreds of its in-

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habitants buried beneath it. Today we find a new and more substantial city built on the site of the ruins. Many of the buildings are imposing. A clean, white city with broadened streets, outside the very center, and among other signs of modernity are enameled street signs at every corner. Most conspicuous of all, however, are the huge yellow signboards at every turn, announcing to the point of shouting that this is no longer the ancient Santo Domingo City—named with such holy reverence by Columbus and remembered so for 450 years—but, “by plebiscite of the people and act of the Legislature,” it has been rechristened Trujillo City!

For those inclined to scoff at this twentieth-century upstart, Trujillo, it will be a tonic to take a drive along the new Malecón Trujillo—it must have cost a hundred thousand or so for condemnation proceedings, clearing away unsightly structures and extending the roadway to the edge of the sea—which is a mile or more in length and a beautiful gesture in civic improvement. It is typically Spanish American in character and a worthy imitation of Havana's Malecón, making a beautiful seaside driveway and reclaiming for the municipality a marine parkway—that is to be extended indefinitely, in the Trujillo Plan. The balustraded concrete sidewalks are interspersed with benches and rows of shade trees. Continuing our drive along the lovely coastway we come upon the ghastly remains of the mansions of the rich razed by the hurricane. Only the street walls of richly wrought iron and masonry and the mute foundations and overgrown gardens indicate their former grandeur. In some cases, a shack has been built over the remains, the surrounding grounds still lit-

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tered with uprooted trees and here and there iron girders twisted as though by giant hands. This whole waterfront for miles was swept to destruction, annihilating the homes of rich and poor alike. A few of the fine houses have been rebuilt, however, and a number of new mansions are rising, the finest among them being a modern North American palace owned by near relatives of President Trujillo.

Nevertheless, Trujillo City is impressive, with more ballast and color than most of the West Indian metropolises. Whether from distaste of the new title, or from habit, it is always referred to by natives everywhere as "La Capital."

We make our way back to the narrow, always crowded streets, with their National City Bank, Royal Bank of Canada and Bank of Nova Scotia, arriving just at the time the public schools are out and the streets are flooded with an amazing assortment of uniformed boys and girls of all shades of black and brown. In appearance, they will compare favorably with any similar group of young people in the world. Trujillo has taken many pages from the books of Japan and Germany in putting the teeth of efficiency into his plan. One of them is the uniforming of the school children; especially the boys, who wear imitation soldier suits, thus appealing to their imagination and nationalism at the same time.

The town is a glut of motorcars, trucks, burros with bulging panniers, pinto ponies with a picturesque assortment of riders and burdens—bundles of wood, barrels of bread, cans of milk, baskets of vegetables, bales of hay and straw; small donkey-drawn carts, driven by stupid peons; stray chickens and roosters or an occasional pig

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with all her sucklings, or a herd of goats, or a cow, with always a sprinkling of "homey" dogs, but few if any cats. Spaniards more Spanish than in Spain, black mammies, dandified mulattos and linen-clad whites.

We have already discussed, in the abstract and in the past, sugar, the white gold and key commerce of the West Indies. That sugar is still king of the islands and that in certain instances it still equals the romance and adventure and might of the old days, we shall have no difficulty in illustrating. Yet, in some ways, the two worlds are as far apart as the stars are from the earth.

To begin with, it is generally acknowledged that Santo Domingo has the best soil in the Indies for the cultivation of sugar cane. So we shall set forth into the heart of the sugar-cane country, where we, personally, were treated to one of the most astounding revelations in our career. Our destination is the Estate Consuelo, of the Compañía Azucarera Dominicana C. por A., as it is commercially known.

Consuelo is a sugar settlement within the company's domain, which comprises some 70,000 acres in this particular division, and 100,000 acres more on the other side of the island. The estate, or central, lies 45 miles eastward along the coast from the capital. The country is flat and uninteresting in the main. We recall one picturesque water hole beside the road where a dozen women or children may always be seen working a windlass and laboriously drawing up pails of water from a stream. It is the local social center. Later, we cross perhaps the largest cantilever steel bridge in the Indies, recently erected by Trujillo under American contract with all-native labor

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and dedicated to one of the members of his family. A few miles farther on, the cane fields begin, with one owned and controlled by Italians. The smokestacks of half a dozen sugar mills appear from time to time, several of them in ruins; these were abandoned when sugar hit the bottom. It makes us realize that modern sugar adventurers have tasted the sugar-coated pill of unprofitable cane, as well.

A little flagman's hut where the narrow-gauge railway crosses the highway marks the beginning of the Consuelo Estate, about twelve miles this side of the settlement. Soon we see the two tall black stacks of the mill and a few minutes later drive through a gate like a Japanese torii and are inside the workers' *batey*, as the colony is called. A long street of two-family cabins houses most of the 2,500 black millworkers; at the end of this street a gatetender swings open the barrier that admits us to a palm-shaded avenue that is the beginning of the residential district. Here dwell the big boss, or administrator-general, and the majority of his two-score American staff.

We find ourselves in the living and lively center of a self-contained little empire, over which our host rules as Mogul. It is in no sense a republic, for the ruler is supreme and his word is the law. An absolute monarchy—though never despotic—of the Land of Sugar. Here, for a month, we live a strange life; strange, because it is so supernatural, in many ways more modernly luxurious than your or our life at home. We can walk to the table telephone in our suite and call up our home in Redding, Connecticut, in less time than it seems to take to get it from New York. Sitting beside our short-wave radio set

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we listen to the best that is being broadcast from the four corners and the seven seas—London, Paris, Berlin, Rome—no longer content with America's so often cheap jazz programs advertising tooth pastes, mouth washes and cure-alls. Our plumbing and bath fixtures are the best, with indirect lighting and many new gadgets that we had never even heard of. Our onion soup has the touch of Paris, for our Chinese cook is the peer of any Parisian chef we have ever met. Our supply of ice is inexhaustible, for we make not only the electricity that runs our Frigidaires, but also that which supplies the whole countryside, so that we have floods of light and every known domestic appliance that can be operated by power. Our coffee is the finest in the world and comes from a neighboring plantation that has supplied the Vatican for centuries. Our rum is almost piped from neighboring stills that our cane supplies. Our Scotch—the best at less than home prices per bottle—comes from the nearby British islands. We are as cosmopolitan, well informed and traveled as the diplomatic hacks and half-pay colonels of a Pall Mall club; we have to be, for we want to keep abreast of the world with which we have lost physical touch. We do not feel compelled to indulge in all of its petty, pothouse political gossip, as we surely would if we were at Home in person, so we choose the best of everything in life to make up for both the precious and the paltry things that no longer interest us, for in becoming exiles from our littler world we have gained in breadth and stature by being made familiar citizens of the big world. Our clothes are the latest mode, for we are patrons of Paris, of London and of New York. Our lady does her buying through an expert correspondent



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shopper in New York. Our golf course is just out yonder—four minutes by motor—with a nineteenth hole that has all the recipes for drinks of your swanky club, and then some. A nine-hole course that both Kirkwood and Sarazen admit to be one of the best in the world. After the game we bathe in a twenty-foot-deep pool supplied by cool mountain water. We can go shooting for wild guinea fowl that flock down on the course while we are playing. We use the course also as the landing field for our company's plane with a hangar conveniently nearby. As for bridge, our ladies have their afternoon club and a game follows each of the frequent dinner parties.

"Who are the provincials?" demanded our host during one of the evening *conversazioni* when we all sit round and intelligently discuss international affairs, the latest plays and books and trends, with the same zest and familiarity as we do local gossip or sectional scandal at Home. "I am always disappointed when I go Home for a visit, at the narrowness of their vision, their local prejudices and constricted point of view. I don't know, but it all seems so provincial to me." And yet we continentals continue to look down upon all these "island" exiles as being provincial and hopelessly out of things.

Our own case was typical. A couple of years previously, Santo Domingo had been a more or less vague historical recollection, a pin-point islet on the map of the world, a jungle island swept by hurricanes and rife with revolution, its people just a distant black cloud. How soon living contacts and intimate acquaintance make the strangest places a familiar landscape in the flow of the river of life, showing that one's life and one's world are identical. What

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and where we live constitutes what and who we really are or become. Be it the city beehive, the tangled jungle or the sophisticated sugar central, our daily perspective paints and frames our own perspective of life. That picture of the Consuelo Plantation shall always hang in a prominent place in our own private gallery of life's colorful scenes.

Our host's hacienda, like all other possessions, is a model of wealth and well-being minus competitive ostentation and vulgarity. Just a simple good-sized bungalow surrounded on all sides by a spacious roofed and screened veranda. The actual rooms within the core of the house are devoted to sleeping chambers and a billiard hall. The wake-hour living is done practically out of doors on the broad verandas. The living room, for example, is about 100 by 50 feet, brilliantly lighted by a score of shaded bridge lamps beside as many wicker easy chairs and chaise longues. Wall bookshelves contain a thousand choice books, as well as all the latest novels. The reading table holds not less than two score current periodicals and magazines, including those of both England and America. The dining room is an extension veranda at the far end. Our guest quarters occupy a quarter of the veranda space, separated by a ten-foot glass partition.

As guests, our daily life is one of *dolce far niente*. Our personal whims and northern wishes are anticipated. The moment we arrive, our tropical clothes are almost stripped from our backs and hurried off to the two waiting black laundresses who have cabins in the rear and do nothing but wash clothes from morning till night, taking great pride in the faultlessness of their work.

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Servants are plentiful, so we are assigned two, and they will continue to serve us all our lives in pleasant memory. The first of these—as maid in waiting for our better half—is L'Aparicia. She is precious; a rotund dark-skinned person, solemn or smiling by turns; a bundle of devotion from head to toe. She has been both nurse and mentor to three generations of children, that include our hostess and her child; the latter has just acquired an English governess, which probably accounts for much of L'Aparicia's solemnity. Perfect personification of the ante-bellum black mammy of the South, save that she is more Spanish than black in blood, temperament and heredity. She has no English whatsoever. L'Aparicia's real name was Victorina Garcia but, owing to the circumstance that she was born before her time, she renamed herself L'Aparicia (Apparition) because she came like an apparition into this world. For this reason she considered herself as having strange "powers" above those of the ordinary mortal. We northerners know no such devotion as hers, for her service is born of love and therefore nothing she does can be ignoble or merely menial. She is always hanging around somewhere near to see if she can be of service. Like the Chinese servants, she assumes that she is invisible and enters truly like an apparition at any moment of one's toilet or dishabille. For example, she hands us our cup of herb tea—her own invention and suggestion for our stomach's sake—as we stand wrestling with our shirt only partially covering our nakedness, and smiles benignly from one of the loveliest of faces. Once we forgot to dismiss her and found her waiting outside the door an hour later. She beamed with pleasure on being

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discovered and was dismayed when we told her there was nothing more for her to do.

The second of these domestic prodigies was the manservant delegated to our service—Mr. Stanley J. Clarke. He really deserves a chapter, for he represents and presents a glowing phase of not only the black problems of the islands, but also of the whole negro race floundering in a white man's world. Clarke belongs more properly in the section devoted to the British West Indies, for he was a native of Tortola, B.W.I. Nevertheless, his migration reveals the fluid state of the island populations in the economic plight that drives them hither and yon in an effort to better their sometimes deplorable condition. Incidentally, all the 2,500 blacks within the Consuelo batee were British islanders; full-blooded negroes as a rule. The reason given was that on the whole they are far better workers and more tractable than the native Dominicans.

Clarke was a rare bird of his species. His ambition was boundless and his progress most commendable considering the well-nigh insuperable handicaps under which he labored. He was a devoted follower of Marcus Garvey (whose light seems to have been extinguished, for he appears to be living in domestic felicity in a well-feathered nest among his own people in the cottage section of Kingston, Jamaica) in the uplift of the negro and a fixed belief in the equality—if not the actual superiority—of the black race. Poet, intellectual, soaring far above his fellows; militant, yet fanatical on the subject of world peace. He reads all the advertisements in the boss's magazines about home study and mental improvement and has taken several courses, including Better English,

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Journalism, and Writing for Profit. He burns midnight oil and his learning shows in his superior deportment, particularly among his fellows with whom he conducts himself on an elevated plane that is generally respected. His higher education includes a profound knowledge of sex hygiene and a practice of birth control, which sets him apart as the only childless negro on the place. By virtue of his higher social and intellectual ideas, standards and creed, he feels he does not deserve to live with the herd in one of the batey shanties, especially when by day he dwells in a mansion surrounded by luxuries, which he secretly believes he has as much a right to as his boss. Furthermore, he is active secretary of the "We Rise to the Lord" religious movement and his wife plays in the batey women's orchestra. In this confused state of emotions, motives and motivations, Clarke found himself amid a torment of contradictions. In the first place, he is a "gentleman's gentleman," as British belowstairs parlance has it; this, by the tradition of "service," elevates him above his fellow servants but, based on his ultramodern and accepted theories of social equality, makes him one of the lowest creatures on God's free earth. All this ferment, however, helped give expression to a latent literary talent that was finest in its moments of crudity and when his work reflected the influence of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and the King James version of the Bible, of both of which he is a devoted student.

Here and there among his writings, that he laid before us, were coals plucked from the furnace of his burning soul, like these:

Lamenting on the peacelessness of the world:

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*Come, sing with me at eventide  
When strife is ceased and guns forever still;  
Sing joyfully beside the graves, to cheer the inmates that  
now are cold.  
For they have never heard the cries  
That brought to us the victory.*

And again, in rhetorical prose: "Many, many years have rolled by and a diversity of changes presented themselves to a race of people physiologically known as the Negro race, a race that has assisted in the economical, financial and cultural development of the entire world. But because we have recently immersed [his spelling retained] from a long period of Slavery and serfdom and attrosity, imposed upon us by our captors and which we bore with unnatural patience, we are now looked upon as an inferior race, a degraded people." He goes on to say that the yoke of inequality, insults and indignities is becoming harder and harder to bear. "The Plight of a Race," he calls it. It is volcanic racial muttering that should be heeded, especially by the whites of the Indies.

In another vein, he again touches the hem of the beautiful. It is *An Ode to the Dominican Republic*, under whose flag he lives and which he seemingly loves:

*I can boast no bulwark along my shore,  
No guns on my turrets high,  
No sentry to halt those who enter my gate,  
By land or by sea or by sky.  
A welcoming smile with an outstretched arm  
Has been my sole gesture for years.  
Come, lisp to my songs that are sung 'neath the palms  
By the joyful Troubadours.*

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*I'll take a dance with an Indian queen,  
I will rumbò my cares away  
With a few glasses of rum or a native cigar—  
I will dance till the dawn of day!*

It may be gathered from this that our Stanley Clarke was always soaring somewhere between heaven and hell. Long, lean and ethereal, promptly at seven he soared in with the cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, accompanied by Louis—Number 2 boy, as they would say in China. Louis is a French West Indian, an economic expatriate from Guadeloupe; very light colored, sleek and worldly and high-class, speaking four languages fluently. They entered noiselessly, ducking in Chinese fashion as they passed between two persons conversing, giving each a deep Oriental bow, which added savor and a sense of luxury that are rare these days. Dinner follows, faultlessly served, with vintage wines—for our plantation cellars are both wide and deep. We repair to our semi-reclining wicker chairs, where liqueurs are always served in pairs by Clarke, closely followed by Louis with *café noir*. Perhaps we sit and chat for an hour, settling the affairs of the world, or maybe listen to a concert in London, or to Amos 'n' Andy, or to Lowell Thomas, then a rubber of bridge, or evening guests: Britishers from neighboring Turks Island, driven here by economic pressure, or perhaps the German doctor, head of the hospital at nearby Macoris.

Such in general was our "life of Reilly" on an American sugar plantation in darkest Santo Domingo. But, through it all, night and day, like the throb of a tom-tom, thundered the endless trains of sugar cane on their

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way to the monster mill that never ceased grinding, crunching and squeezing, twenty-four hours a day for six months of the year. The powerful little engines—one bearing the name “The Skipper” on the side of the cab, in honor of our host. At midnight and at noon the whistle would summon a new shift of workers. From December till June the cane must be cut and the grinding must go on and on.

Several days elapsed before we plunged into this empire of sugar, and it was a week before we emerged from our partial explorations. If we had known what was ahead of us, we might not have had the courage or the eagerness to demand that we see “everything.” It was not until later that we learned some of the staggering statistics of this Compañía Azucarera Dominicana. A few of them give some idea of the cast of characters that appear in a single spectacular Drama of Sugar:

Consuelo Rail-			
road:	12 locomotives	180 miles of trackage	
Barahona (same			
organization)	20 locomotives	250 “	“
Others	7	80 “	“
Motor track en-			
gines	25		
1,500 large steel cane cars		1,200 bullcarts	
600 cars for use on portable			
tracks			
25 automobiles		20 sugar lighters	
15 heavy trucks		4 seagoing tug towboats	
2,000 factory workers		20,000 field workers	



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40 white foreigners		
2 main company stores (yearly turnover, \$650,- 000)		250 store employees
60 branch stores		
10,000 work animals (oxen)		500 horses and mules
10,000 breeding herd		
Acres of cane (Eastern Divi- sion—Consuelo)	70,000	
Acres of cane (Western Divi- sion—Barahona)	100,000	
Acres of pasturage	50,000	
Irrigation canals (Barahona)	400 miles	
Drainage canals	160 "	
Bateys (workers' settlements)	60 houses	2,000
East		inhabitants
Bateys (Barahona)	15 "	1,000
		inhabitants
Cost of Barahona alone	\$23,000,000	
Yield (1936)	1,200,000	320-lb. bags

Skipper and ourself started out early one morning over the twenty-three million dollar Barahona Estate, planned, built and conducted regardless of cost as the last word in cane cultivation. An American model estate for all time. Sugar was selling retail in the States at thirty cents a pound at the time. A few years at that figure would have paid for the estate, but sugar dropped in price year after year until it cost more to produce than it could be sold for.

A mighty mill and a model compound, with houses of brick for white employees and officials, were built and

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surrounded by a lovely park overlooking a turquoise bay, one of the loveliest in the Indies. Golf links, clubhouse, library, infirmary, administration building, movie theater, company store and public market. The harbor is historic, for the "plate fleet" of the Spaniards used to lie there and await the galleon escorts to convoy their cargoes of gold to Spain—if they escaped the pirates that lurked outside.

After we had covered a few miles we entered the plantation proper. There would have been nothing more than a trail here had not the company come and set 10,000 natives to work over a period of more than two years, pushing back the jungle and converting what had been a wilderness into a luxuriant garden of sugar cane over a vast fertile valley; incidentally giving the native population within a hundred square miles the first real economic pickup that they had had since Spanish days. It is the only road penetrating the back country in this part of the island, so it is used as a highway by everybody. Like the company's railway that runs alongside it, it is elevated many feet above the bottom land and numerous streams had to be crossed by means of sizable cantilever steel bridges, with separate right of way for pedestrians and vehicles, and for cane trains which pass frequently with their several hundred tons of fresh-cut cane.

This is the drier side of the island, hence successful cultivation depends upon irrigation. In addition to way-laying and diverting a rushing river, it was necessary to build a mighty concrete dam forty miles distant up in the mountains and dig a miniature Panama Canal, fifteen feet wide and ten feet deep, with tributaries feeding the thirsty fields that were laid out in lovely plots, miles square.

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Crops failing to thrive, it became necessary to dig a few hundred miles of drainage canals, with the aid of huge rotary plows that smashed a swath five feet broad right through the jungle and did the work of fifty natives. The Machine was at work!

This irrigation system is a godsend to the natives, for they now have a perennial water supply for drinking, bathing and washing in the irrigation rivers and catching fish in the drainage canals.

As we penetrated farther and farther into the vast area with the distant mountain dam as our destination, the road became rougher. Our first pause was made about fifteen miles along the road at a settlement where the river is pumped into the first series of canals. Here we were introduced to Sanford, who exercised an iron sway over the neighborhood and all the natives who came within his domain. Sanford has lived forty years in the tropics and had gone completely native. He was like a character from *Rain*. He appeared in dungarees, bare feet, a straggly beard evidently hacked off with scissors, gentle blue eyes, a smiling countenance, and a twangy down-East lingo with which long dissociation had played tricks. He hated "niggers" and they were all afraid of him, especially when, once a month, he drank a bottle of "monkey rum" and lay in a torpor like a sullen rattlesnake ready to pounce upon and beat any black who came within his long reach. Sober, he was endowed with a rare wit and a philosophy and a curious jungle philanthropy that had caused him to "marry" four black women to save them from something. At that moment three of them lived with him as concubines in a whitewashed hut behind

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the works, where we saw half a dozen wild-looking dark children peering at us from the flower garden that was Sanford's principal diversion. He was a jungle sultan and his harem of willing slaves waited on him hand and foot. God help them, if they didn't. Above all, he hated English blacks, whom he wittily called "British objects"—a term that has gained usage among all the whites on the island. We had barely met him when he interrupted the conversation to hurl a huge negro out of our presence with his two hairy muscular arms and then returned panting. "The white man has always been the master of the goddam nigger and he always will be the master of the sonsabitches, if I have anything to do with it!" Yet he lived the life of the average transplanted African, himself one of them in everything except his skin and his mental quirk.

We push on and on, under a pitiless sun, amid almost intolerable heat. We pass batey after batey, each with its commissary and office. Once we catch up with a section overseer, just emerging from the cane where five hundred negroes are cutting, leisurely it seemed. He had a fine-looking face under his helmet and sat astride a good horse, and we noted that he carried a revolver in his ammunition belt. "We are gradually replacing the American overseers with this type of Dominican," the big boss said, as we dashed along again, thrown all over the car by the roughness of the road. "Most Americans get restless and tired and homesick. They let down on the work, on the blacks, where there must be no letdown. Then they go back home just when they are getting to be of some value."

Every five miles there is a loading station with a huge

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steel scaffolding, electric crane and weighing apparatus. Here, the oxcarts and interplantation railways, with their movable tracks, unload. The entire load, two tons of cane, is lifted high in the iron jaws of the crane and carefully laid into the especially constructed steel cars of the main line; at the mill these cars, containing fifteen tons each, are lifted to the side of the cutting pit and the contents dumped among the revolving knives.

We reached the end of the cutting areas at last and then plunged into a primeval jungle growth, where the rotary plows were at work extending the plantation area; Nature and the Machine in a terrible struggle under which men wilted. The dam was a mighty affair, damming one river and releasing another alongside of which we rode for miles, once choosing an exotic trail that led us through a native village that might have been in the heart of Africa.

Our return at the close of day, when the machete-armed native cutters were wending their way homeward after their twelve hours' toil, added something to the drama. One sight alone gave us inspiration and food for thought—a splendid-looking black woman, with a huge basket of family washing balanced on her head, a naked child on her hip, and two older children romping ahead. She was striding along, smoking her evening pipe of contentment. Strong in purpose, sturdy in aim, unswerving in her path of duty. She had seen her course in life, even to this day's life, and its duties and her eyes showed that she had had the satisfaction of acquitting herself. She had performed to the highest interpretation of her people and her community. To us, at least, there was an aura of nobility

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about her, not of achievement but, what is harder still, of hewing to the line. The barb of the agitator and the reformer telling her that she ought to be unhappy had not yet penetrated her or her community. Race for race, making all allowances, how rarely will we find a white woman carrying on so nobly?

Sugar! What a whopping job it takes to sweeten our tea and make a pleasing morsel for the cake-eaters of life! Forty whites, 25,000 blacks, 10,000 oxen on a single plantation, straining, toiling, moiling from six in the morning till six at night, not to make a profit, but in a desperate effort to break even. "What blood and heartbreak!" lamented our host. "Malaria, worry, sleepless nights and burning insect-bitten days. Thirty millions of American dollars planning and building the finest equipment in the world. And we give our sugar away! I mean what I say—for five years we have given our sugar away!"

On several occasions, we flew from end to end of Santo Domingo; once over the highest island mountain peak in the Western Hemisphere—Mount Tina, 10,300 feet in altitude, and thousands of acres of primeval jungle, much of it never trod by the foot of alien conquerors. Our 110-mile flight from Consuelo to Barahona was typical.

A six-ox team passes beneath us as we rise above our golf course, sweeping out over the partially cut cane fields that look like a 10,000-acre lawn. A trail of white road unwinds leading to La Capital. Batey clusters, the ubiquitous mills and their smoking stacks. Straight through a procession of woolly clouds as though some giant locomotive had recently passed leaving its trail of smoke

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puffs behind. A river with incredible serpentine windings, often doubling in its tracks. More plantations in perfect patterns of beautiful new green. Strips of brown savannas, any richness in the soil showing in green veins of wooded vegetation like emerald rivers with chains of foliage lakes. An occasional motorcar on the highroad like a crawling cockroach. We plow through a cloud bank, which gives the landscape a dirty appearance through the mist, suddenly shoot out of it again and find ourselves hanging over the sea, the whole prospect dazzlingly bright save where the clouds mottle the landscape. La Capital, directly over the three million dollar breakwater and the old U.S.S. *Memphis* that was beached nearly twenty years ago in a hurricane and left by our government as an unsightly mark of inefficiency and disrespect, when no profit was to be made out of it. Shore waters of aquamarine and malachite washing in in three layers of ever-changing lacy foam, the sea for miles scalloped by pretty bays and coves. As we push inland from the green white-collared sea, the flat country grows humpy and seems to roll like waves. Sugar-cane fields again, like freshly laid green linoleum. The mountains seem to rise ominously in our path at our approach; the air getting bumpy as a new-plowed field from cold currents, the plane fidgiting about with nervous shudders. The landscape begins to wrinkle. There is a broad winding river, most of which is a white sand bed with a wisp of deep green water in the center. Felled trees in the mountain clearings look as though some giant had come this way lighting matches to see his way and had dropped the sticks helter-skelter. The mountains take pretty shapes—cones, pyramids; cavalcades of hills

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gambol over the landscape and come to a sudden pause at the foot of a glowering mountain. A higher range, and we have to climb straight into the blue and finally take refuge over the open sea again, a broad bay, the arms of it robed in gorgeous tropical colors known only to the Indies—vitriolic greens and cerulean blues, the more open waters of the purest aquamarine mottled with streaks of sparkling sapphire. The shore line undulates into peninsulas, islands, archipelagoes, creating a fantastic pattern unguessed by earthworms. Over the deep sea again, its velvety blue waters flecked with a thousand puffs of foam from the disporting of a school of large fishes. A shoal enclosing waters the color of ancient Pompeian bronze, and we find ourselves careening down three thousand feet into Barahona.

Santo Domingo and its people grow on one as time and visits pass. Like all Spanish-bred peoples, they are not easy to get acquainted with, but they make deep impressions and one does not easily forget what one learns of them firsthand. Every visit to San Pedro de Macorís is marked with memories. Its many hacks, or carryalls, with bright brass trimmings, scores of handcarts, loud overtones of talk from every doorway and alley, colorful riders galloping through the main street in Wild Western style, the Aurora Primera bus, aproned youths going about with blue glass-covered cases of sweets on their heads and ringing a little bell, the bread boy on a donkey shrilly calling his wares, wide-open schools with children of all hues singing lustily, old men sitting on chairs beneath mango trees, pretentious houses cut short by a boom and closed, the Pan-American flying field, cripples selling lot-



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tery tickets, the inevitable Spanish plaza with stone memorial benches. Every inch Spanish-Dominican.

One Sunday night we went to the movies in Macorís. A gossamer of charm hangs over the town at night, with the old Spanish cracked church bell ringing every half hour. Once inside, we found that the wall beside us was the open tropical night. We had actually been leaning against the bluest of heavens with stars and strange constellations hanging close enough to pluck, or so it seemed. We paid fifty cents each and sat in the *palco*, slightly elevated above the Spanish-white audience, while most of the blacks were in a rude gallery that cost ten cents a seat. The occasion of another visit was more tragic. President Trujillo had promised to make them an official visit accompanied by President Vincent of Haiti, in celebrating the reconciliation of the two countries and settling the boundary line. The second city in the Dominican Republic was all atwitter and the poorest peon had purchased a couple of flags of the two countries, and waited—all day and far into the night. But the president did not come, as he did not appear on many another auspicious occasion, and so fooled—some people said—the omnipresent conspirators.

We were disappointed particularly, because the president had promised to meet us in person. We later saw him in La Mansión, as the palace is called. He sent the general of the army (his brother) for us and we rode lickety-split with flag flying, siren whining and a guard with a machine gun on the front seat. A similar guard sat near us as we chatted and we felt sure he would have blown the top of our head off if we had made a single untoward move.

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President Trujillo is a handsome, personable chap, of mixed blood, faultlessly attired according to the latest London mode. He was very careful of what he said. The sum and substance of the issue seems to be, whether the Dominicans prefer to remain under the despotic rule of a dictator who is bringing them heretofore unknown prosperity and putting them on the map or under the government of a president who permits everyone to do as he pleases amid frequent revolutions and continuous poverty. But whatever they may think about it, they are given no choice.

And so at length, and reluctantly, we find ourselves aboard the tiny *Catherine*, once more following the trail of Columbus toward the dark and dangerous Mona Passage, sailing close to the little island of Mona which The Admiral discovered and landed upon on his second voyage, in 1494.



## Chapter Five

### THE BLACK REPUBLIC—HAITI

*Invasion and Influence—History—Independence—Native Leadership—American Occupation—The Perfect Guide—Cockfighting and Voodooism—Indelible Marks of Spain—Christophe and His Citadelle—Reversion to Africa—The Problem of Blacks and Half-Blacks—Eventide*

Our first glimpse of Port-au-Prince, as we ease into the beautiful shell-shaped harbor, is significant. A white-washed town sprawls in the broiling sun like a dozing, dreaming creature at the foot of green hills. Three buildings stand out prominently, rising above the low white mass of houses. Each represents an important phase in Haitian culture and influence, like bookmarks in its checkered history, showing the chapters of its domination down through the centuries. Solid and four-square in the center stands the imposing Gothic Cathedral, symbolizing the mighty and dignified influence of the Catholic Church, with particular reference to France who through its medium has never ceased to sway the black republic with its language, its refinements and its culture, although its governing power was thrown violently into the sea nearly a century and a half ago. At the extreme right lie the

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National Palace and the Palace of Justice, in excellent architecture and palatial proportions representing the administrative heights to which latter-day Haiti has attained. Finally, on the left rises a tall, ugly smokestack above an expansive and expensive sugar and rum factory, marking the third and last aspect, the American invasion and influence; an outstanding example of the American enterprise that always "follows the flag." In this case, it followed the American occupation. . . . A bare broad street runs along the wharves, with depots for scores of native buses painted in gaudy colors like circus chariots, an open market filled with a thousand chattering natives shielded from the sun by rag awnings. . . . A hasty hot motor drive through the broad Champ-de-Mars, with perhaps unthinking and fatal comparisons with Paris. A dusty ride to the summit of Kensicoff and a precipitous dash down again, the way lined with begging natives; to the Petionville Club for luncheon; then, "having seen everything," many an impatient tourist is through with all Haiti. That is a pity, for Haiti is the most interesting and, in some respects, the most idyllic of the islands.

With only a passing glance at the black republic and a momentary consideration of its black people, Haiti must remain an enigma, unfathomed, unappreciated. On the other hand, a brief introduction to the make-up of the Haitians and their achievements sets them apart as one of the most extraordinary—and possibly erratic—nations throughout the whole of the Americas. All things must be measured in terms and terminology of black people: their rise from slavery and oppression, the only nation to defeat the arms of Napoleon in the flower of his might; their

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brilliant beginnings in the exploits and rule of L'Ouverture and Dessalines; and their limitations as shown in the meteoric rise and fall of Henri Christophe, whose career makes one of the most romantic pages in all history.

The history, progress and present status of Haiti may be briefly stated. Columbus discovered and established his government on the eastern end of the island of Hispaniola (under which name it now appears in all official United States records), or Haiti, at what is now Santo Domingo City, Dominican Republic. Columbus' first settlement on the island, however, was made near the present site of Cap-Haitien. The million or more aborigines having been disposed of by the Spaniards within a generation, the first organised slave traffic brought in time several hundred thousand negroes to the island. These slaves are the ancestors of the present-day three million Haitians, making the Republic of Haiti the most densely populated land of the Indies. In 1629, a band of French and English adventurers took possession of the neighboring island of Tortuga. Later, the French drove the English away and settled the western section of the island. In 1697, Spain ceded this portion to France. At the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789, it was France's most prosperous colony. At that time there were 400,000 black slaves, 30,000 whites, and 40,000 mixed bloods and freed negroes. Through the agitation of its extraordinary genius, Toussaint L'Ouverture, formerly a slave, the colony was inclined to take the Revolutionary doctrine of the Rights of Man seriously. All slaves were declared free. In May, 1801, a self-made assembly of ten members made L'Ouverture governor of Saint-Domingue for life.

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Napoleon, then First Consul, declared this secession and rebellion, organized a powerful expedition of 70 warships and an army of 25,000 men under command of his brother-in-law, General Leclerc. One of the first acts of Leclerc was to reestablish slavery. Then another masterful negro, General Jean Jacques Dessalines, assisted by a mulatto, Pétion, gave the signal for revolt. The struggle for independence lasted a year, during which time the French army was reinforced several times. In the end, the greater part of the French army and all the remaining whites were killed or died of the plague—including General Leclerc, 50 other high officers and their army of 45,000. On January 1, 1804, General Dessalines declared his nation free and independent. In September of the same year the country was renamed Haiti, as it had been known by the aborigines. Dessalines was made its first head, and took the title of emperor. He was killed in a military ambush two years later.

Thereupon rose one of the world's most extraordinary figures, Henri Christophe, a former slave; this illiterate giant of a black man became president of the then declared republic. Finding his powers greatly restricted, he made himself king. As a result, the north and the west were separated and remained so until Christophe's death, in 1820. Christophe governed his kingdom with an iron hand and proved to be an administrator and a lawmaker of exceptional ability. He constructed the famous palace of Sans-Souci—the ruins of which we shall visit—as his residence, and created a court, and then erected on the summit of a neighboring mountain what is now listed as one of the Twenty Wonders of the World, the Citadelle

Laferrière. Harassed by his enemies, Christophe committed suicide.

In 1822, Santo Domingo revolted against Spain. Haiti aided her in throwing off the yoke and added that territory to her republic. The union lasted until 1844. Our interest jumps to 1915, when President Guillaume Sam massacred several score of his political opponents as they languished in jail and was in turn cut into small pieces by his citizens in the revolution that followed. At this point the United States stepped into an occupation that lasted twenty years, evacuating the country during the incumbency of Stenio Vincent, whom we shall meet in our travels.

We shall meet another Haitian, however, who did more than any and all others to exemplify in person the true, complex and picturesque nature of his people. His name was simply Molière. We met him first while trying to escape a tropical downpour, when we jumped into a passing and disreputable Ford jitney of uncertain vintage. Molière was owner-driver. Molière personified Haiti. Our acquaintance ripened, until we knew that we had found a treasure, and Molière knew that he had found a customer good for at least twenty-five cents a day. Molière was a lovable vagabond, more than six feet tall, lean and loose-jointed, his arms and legs much too long for his white cotton clothes; very black, and under his hide a pure and superstitious African, although in speech, manner and deportment as polite and as French as a Parisian boulevardier. He had learned Americanese from the marines during the occupation and it consisted chiefly of five words: "'Ello-T'ankeyou-Okay-Goodbye-God-dammit!" He played on these words with the dexterity

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of a clever musician playing a five-holed flute, especially in the presence of awed natives who thought he was speaking voluble English. We already knew, and later learned beyond peradventure, that Molière was our devoted slave and would do anything in this world for us—even to the point of laying down his life, unless it happened to interfere with something that he had already planned to do for himself. We had lain awake nights conceiving the idea of Molière, ourself and the Ford making an excursion from Port-au-Prince to the Citadelle! It was only a couple of hundred miles and the marines with Haitians working under them were said to have built a good road. Molière was delighted, although too dignified to show it. He had always wanted to visit the Citadelle, but had never seen his way financially clear to doing it. It is the shrine of all Haitians, and in his heart Molière secretly believed that he bore some resemblance to Henri Christophe. Therefore, following a certain evening when we closed the bargain, Molière became our guide and mentor, chauffeur and muleteer, by turns, taking complete charge of our body, soul and spirit, using them and abusing them at will to his own ends, though never with malice.

What proved to be the most memorable trip of our lives was to begin promptly at eight o'clock the following morning. Molière appeared at ten-thirty. And who was this, sitting so boldly beside him in the front seat, where we had intended to sit? Oh, that was his cousin, a local dentist. He, too, had always had an ambition to see the Citadelle and had decided to come along—at our expense. He had overslept, Molière explained, as we were introduced. It was too early to get angry, but we did put the



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"doctor" into the back seat in short order. It was only the beginning of vexatious happenings on a four-day trip that lasted eight. We had a conventional idea of sticking to main-traveled roads, but Molière had secretly planned—and executed it with a vengeance—to take this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of visiting his relatives, legitimate and illegitimate, scattered over the countryside. We never were the skipper of the hair-raising expedition that followed; but we gave up trying to be before that first nightfall.

It was Sunday, and for this reason we met many natives carrying fighting cocks under their arms on their way to the nearest cockpit. We said we would like to see a cockfight, a small one. But Molière knew better and waited until we came to a mammoth battle that he and the doctor wanted to see. We paused under a mahogany tree, first refreshing ourselves with the milk of several green coconuts, the tops of which the vendor hacked off with the machete that every native carries in place of a pocket-knife. Then we plunged into the crowd of several hundred natives that had gathered beneath the shade of a mango grove. Here Molière first exhibited his pride in being our conductor and manager. Thereafter, we were exhibited and hurtled about under the cognomen of "M. le Blanc." Using ourself as a battering ram, he literally tore his way through the mob, twenty-deep, to the rightside. These blacks had gone savage and bloodthirsty, thoroughly beside themselves in their excitement, further stimulated with *clairine*, or white rum. In their ugly mood, the sight of a white man did not help our case. M. le Docteur and Molière actually fought a couple of battles in

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our behalf, before we were thrust into a cramped position within a few feet of the fighting cocks and their backers, with the mob of sweating, yelling, half-mad natives crushing us from behind. If we had fallen into that ring and so much as touched one of the birds, we would have been slain! There we had to remain for nearly half an hour, until one of the cocks lay dead at our feet; then we crawled back to the Ford more dead than alive.

Molière was in fine fettle over this initial success, and soon after was taking us into a cemetery on the edge of a large town where he told us solemnly in his patois, "There I lie buried—come and see!" We declined. He explained that there his wife and baby, papa and mamma and many not clearly defined relatives lay in the ground. Soon after this we left the main highway and traveled the greater part of the rest of the journey on the world's worst roads that had known only the hoofs of the burro and the pad of bare feet, along the very edge of the jungle. Most of the time we were completely lost, but Molière would never acknowledge it. Every little while we came upon a Dahomey-like native village, where more than likely a relative was unearthed, for Molière claimed relationship to nearly everyone we met in inquiring our way hither and thither. The ceremony was always the same. There would be an exchange of names, then Molière would rush up to a big black fellow and they would fold in a French embrace, kissing each other on both cheeks. Then we would be introduced as his dear friend, M. le Blanc. In another moment, we were all dear friends together. This went on for several days, we always insisting that we reach one of the small towns for the night. Most of the time we were

completely out of touch with civilization; in darkest Haiti.

We had two adventures in which all our lives hung on a slender thread. We were making our way along a strange road one night in search of a town that could not be far off, when we heard the throb of tom-toms in all the neighboring hills, and soon after processions of singing and dancing natives bearing flambeaux began to wind down in our direction. Molière was a "good Catholic" externally, but at heart he was more like a Zulu. He wore not only a crucifix, but also a native amulet, and stood in deadly fear of the ouanga curse. Before we could get away, we were in the midst of several thousand natives in the throes of a weird pagan ecstasy, commonly known as voodoo. They were hill people and the majority of them had never seen a white man. We were ordered out of the car in no friendly terms, as though we were spies. We stood quaking under a breadfruit tree, and they circled closer and closer, chanting strange rhythms and words that have been handed down for generations, the drums beating faster and faster, reedlike whistles blowing, musical sticks and gongs beating. At the head of each village clan a papa-loi, or tribal doctor, twirled his long silver stick like a drum major. They were all dancing, every joint and muscle quivering to the unearthly rhythm, some one of them standing out and giving a personal demonstration from time to time. Taking an occasional swig of clairine, growing wilder and wilder, and many passionately angry at us, our white self in particular, they would make passes at us as they came nearer and nearer. Our suspense ended at last, when a giant papa-loi in twirling his silver

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wand caught us a glancing blow on the mouth, cutting our lip and knocking out a tooth. Frankly, we thought our end was at hand, when a dramatic reaction came. It was the giant himself who laid his big black paw on our face and helped stanch the flow of blood, contrition in his eyes. Five minutes later we were dashing away toward the not-far-off town.

The next untoward incident came one night when we had got completely lost in the jungle in the high mountains, which we had to cross just before coming down into Cap-Haitien. A devastating storm, that was not wholly past, had washed away parts of the highway over the pass. In making the detour along a native trail, the stony way became so bad that we could no longer make the little Ford perform miracles. Progress and a fairly good road lay on the other side of the swollen mountain torrent. While we were all straining in vain and worrying about our plight, a new and more sinister danger suddenly surrounded us in the persons of nearly a hundred natives, who seemed to spring up out of the earth. They were Cacos, a sort of tribal organization that had rebelled against American rule. The marines put down the revolt with merciless pursuit, and a considerable number of the Cacos were killed. They hated the whites. We hastily withdrew and sat in the car. They surrounded Molière, a murderous-looking crew in the glare of their torches, machetes in hand. Finally he consummated a bargain. They were to transport the Ford across the river onto the good roadbed, for twenty-five cents. Then they discovered M. le Blanc huddled in the car. There was a wild shout, murderous looks and another powwow. We thought that murder was being planned.

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The outcome seemed to trouble Molière much more than if we had been slaughtered in our tracks. Because of the undesirable presence of M. le Blanc, the price had been boosted to two dollars. We had never seen Molière so furious. He sullenly got into the car in which M. le Docteur and ourself already sat. In the course of thirty minutes, during which we were all nearly drowned mid-stream, straining and sweating, they literally carried the car to the farther side of the river. Then something dramatic happened. Molière started the engine, gave her gas, and off we flew scattering blacks right and left. He had made up his mind that he would not pay them that two dollars. I would gladly have given them ten! There was a yell and a shower of stones and at least forty of them started after us. There is not the least doubt but that they would have carved us all into small pieces, if a tire had blown out or they could have caught up with us, for they pursued us for a half hour and the road was none too good. All the while Molière and M. le Docteur sat there laughing their foolish heads off.

It was nearly midnight when we arrived in Cap-Haitien. Molière and his cousin were billeted with more relatives and I was booked to stop at the only white hostelry we found open at that hour, the Pan-American Hotel. It turned out to be the most murderous and disreputable rumhole that I have ever spent the night at on five continents. The proprietor was a besotted ex-marine sergeant who at the moment was being bullied at the point of a stiletto by a stray Cherokee half-breed who had got stranded on the island from a circus, so he said at least, in which his act was to throw knives at the two fancy ladies

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he had brought with him. He became very friendly with us, and in a maudlin manner managed to "frisk" our wallet containing twenty-eight dollars, which was all the money we had left. We managed to lock ourself in a cell of a room for the night, with only a ten-inch porthole in the thick walls, framing the sparkling Big Dipper turned upside down, which of itself seemed an ominous sign. We escaped at daybreak the next morning, however, stumbling out over the drunken sleeping blacks sprawled all over the patio floor.

We were now in the magic terrain of Henri Christophe and, incidentally, in what had once been the French metropolis in the West Indies, then called Cap-François. The town had an undeniable charm. It had been laid out by the French and in that heyday it must have been truly beautiful there on the bluff overlooking that turquoise sea. The ruins of the palace of Pauline Bonaparte, wife of General Leclerc, and a building erected from the wreckage of Columbus' flagship, the *Santa Maria*, alone make it a worth-while trip. The large white Cathedral is disappointingly bare and gaunt. The environs for miles around sadly tell the tale of its one-time prosperity, with their crumbling artistic gateways and disheveled avenues of trees, with an occasional glimpse of a sorely battered château that must have housed bewigged, velvet-coated gentlemen and their retinues of slaves, with surrounding sugar plantations that had gone to seed these decades ago.

The "little" life of the town was enchanting, however, at early morning or evening. Children were singsonging games in the middle of streets that began with French

ostentation and petered off into African settlements; one could see just where France left off and the Dark Continent set in. Older folk sat out "befo' their cabin doors," mummies smoking their pipes. We had glimpses inside one-room homes lighted by smoky coal-oil torches. In the gloaming, particularly, Old France and Africa were curiously blended. Yet there still remained in it all a scarcely definable touch of Spain: the men's clubs, for example; the numerous patios; the portieres at the doors of the shops; and more especially was it Spanish in feeling that evening when a band concert was held in the plaza. We sat with half-closed eyes and fancied ourself to be back in a small provincial town in Spain, or France, listening to that murmuring overtone of a foreign tongue, then opening our eyes to find ourself surrounded by blacks beneath the palms in the lazy tropics. Later we dropped in at a death watch—what the Irish would call a wake—held in a lot opposite the parish church. Several hundred natives were alternately drinking white rum and gambling, pausing occasionally to pray for the soul of the departed, amid a sea of flickering candles.

At the crack of dawn we started out on the first leg of the trip out of Cap-Haitien to the Citadelle. The dark mountains ahead of us were just throwing off their blankets of mist and stretching themselves to meet the rising sun, when we drew into Milot, where one may hire a mount to make the fourteen-mile tortuous and arduous ascent through the almost trackless jungle to the mountaintop where the Citadelle superbly stands.

Here we paused in reverence and astonishment before the ruin of Sans-Souci, the royal palace of Christophe,

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now a mass of pillars, balustrades, terraces and crumbling walls on which the jungle is symbolically encroaching.

We now made the acquaintance of another Haitian who might have been Molière's twin, with his benignity and dignity, his self-assurance and imperturbable stubbornness. This was none other than Toussaint—All Saints—the mule allotted to carry us up the mountain. As was the custom, All Saints had not been fed at home and was supposed to forage for himself on the way. He knew what he wanted, which was usually a fragrant leaf that grew far out over crumbling ledges and dangerous precipices. Our whip, threats and blandishments availed nothing, so in the end we let him do what he pleased and learned that he knew far better than we did, for his foot was sure and firm up that trackless way. Toussaint had an assistant, whom he hated with all the venom of a tropical mule. This person was a convict in red stripes, who was lent to us by the National Police in Milot to ease our way. He confided to us as he walked along that he was only a murderer and meant no harm to anybody, if we would only give him a cigarette. We lost no time in doing so. He was the nicest murderer we have ever met.

Now and again through the jungle the Citadelle emerged like the prow of a ship, but there was always still another valley to cross. At length we entered one of the greatest masonry works in the world—everything considered. It is built of huge boulders on a high mountaintop, where no great stones are to be found, over a course of years by thousands of subjects whom Christophe again made slaves, and so sowed the seeds of his undoing. His remains lie



in the lime pit within the fortress walls. The Citadelle is his monument. We signed our name in the guest book in the ruins of the King's Billiard Room. Then we climbed over rotting rafters and crumbling walls; through gun galleries with more than a hundred of the heaviest guns of the period mutely facing the portholes, with thousands of rusty cannonballs in a munitions yard; over many-storied parapets, barracks, once palatial apartments and all the panoply and equipment of the complete early-nineteenth-century impregnable fortress—engineered and built by a common black mason and untutored ex-slave. In all the Americas there is nothing more awe-inspiring.

We dashed back home by the main highway, making part of the trip in darkness; through stretches of desert with tall cacti framed against the horizon like scarecrows, suddenly fording unbridged streams, pausing once under a giant silk-cotton tree to slake our thirst with coconut milk or to snatch a banana from one of the torch-lit wayside stands, all the night through meeting or passing literally thousands of men and women on their way to the local markets to which they tramped for miles bearing heavy burdens of produce on their heads; forging our way through hundreds of domestic animals asleep in the middle of the road—pigs, goats, cows, calves, chickens, ducks—actually stopping only before the threatening hind end of a mule or a donkey. We arrived back in Port-au-Prince at three o'clock in the morning more dead than alive, and firmly refusing to take the tired dentist home before being dumped at our Sans-Souci Hotel.

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One conclusion seemed inevitable from our visit to that once brilliant and sometime glorious empire of that gifted "Emperor Jones" of Hispaniola who flashed like a gorgeous rocket over the jungle, and like all rockets came down but a charred stick. Henri Christophe reached heights seldom attained by a living man of any race; then he blew up. He had all the magnificent imagination common to his race, but lacked vision and the cold sustained endurance and balance of the more unimaginative white man. The borrowed French culture and civilization carried him and his people so far, so brilliantly. But his childlike followers—and even he himself in his latter-day madness—sloughed back into their native jungle, until today, beside the ruins of French-Louis taste and Christophe genius, remain Dahomey huts and a Congo civilization.

Especially in wandering up and down Haitian back-country we found little save Africa. Ultramodernism usually manifests itself in replacing thatched roofs with corrugated iron and using Socony oil cans instead of native gourds. Settlements have as a rule taken refuge beneath a hardy grove of royal palms or mangoes or breadfruit trees. So it has remained—except for a semblance of white man's clothes—ageless, changless Africa. Huts of palm-spined lathing, palm-thatched roofs, mud walls, dirt floors. Black people lying or sitting languidly about, with numerous potbellied naked children, chickens, pigs and a donkey to complete the family picture. The great event of the day is the evening meal, when they gather round an iron pot and a Socony can on the fagot fire in the open, dusky figures squatting under the glare

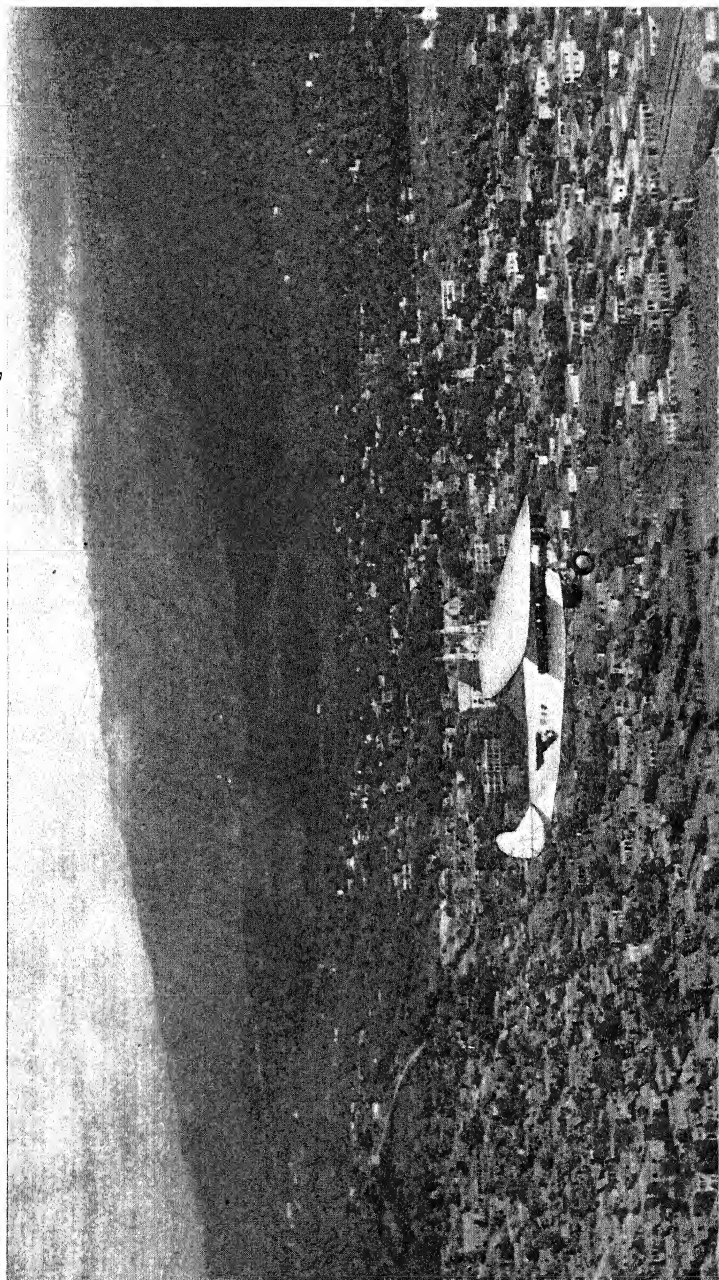
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of coal-oil torch, donkeys companionably heehawing among the exotic trees.

The little life is their big life; great achievements are the material of their perpetual dreaming, which they often discuss as though talking about actual accomplishments. The wayside is dotted with native "shops," often just four posts with a roof of palm leaves, a little dab of this and that for sale. But they are not a lazy people—as the ceaseless movement of countless thousands of burden bearers along the roads will testify. They simply have their own idea of employing their energy, more than a thousand years and a million miles distant from ours. The driving power of modern industrialism irks them. We must bear in mind that they have not had the sharp coercion of the energetic and progressive white master goading them for a century—save in the instances of Christophe's complex and the marines' musket, neither of which they will ever forgive.

One cannot escape some mention of voodoo when discussing Haiti, it seems. There has been no end of nonsense written about voodoo, and some of it mischievous too. Antecedence and heritage, oppression and nostalgia, among such a highly emotional and fanciful race, made inevitable some such survival and outgrowth of its superstitious, spiritual and religious nature. It is not exactly the menace that it has been said to be. The worst that can be said about it is to condemn some of its pagan practices. But in the little lives of these people it is often a safety valve, a blowing off of steam engendered by lack of diversion. The jungle tom-tom has the stirring effect of a martial air on their souls and spirits, and the dances

Haiti, once the remote Hispanola, is now only six hours from Miami by air. Port-au-Prince, its capital, is one of the most curious of Caribbean cities.





This corner of the swarming market square in Port-au-Prince offers a glimpse of what happens when anyone with a handful of cornmeal or beans to sell may go into business.

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are to them just what the dance craze is to some millions of whites. It is all their Big Show, their Harvest Home, their High Mass, their movies, their tea party and wild spree, their blended gratification of soul and body, at once sacred and profane. There are sporadic cases of it in Harlem and it was broadcast over the radio once to millions of white listeners, when Elder ("Happy Am I!") Michaux and his black converts went into religious and melodic ecstasies in front of a microphone. Many of us are familiar with "revivals" in religion and politics among the whites, with excesses that can scarcely be surpassed in black voodoo.

Children of the African moon! So must the great mass of these people be regarded and esteemed, and taken seriously. Mischief and heartbreak begin usually with the inferiority complex in their contact with the white man. As unspoiled children of nature, the whole world of the white man is foreign to them—his type of energy, his outlook, his restraint, his morals, his philosophy. The whites seem shallow in their lack of ecstasies, fancies and spiritual reactions. They see so little and feel so little, by comparison; their egos are too great, their conventions too hidebound. The world is so full of wonderful things that the white scarcely senses: the peopled night, the brooding darkness, the mystic hills, the spirits of the upper air, Mother Nature—a world of kindred spirits, of gorgeous visions, of stirring ecstasies.

We have been speaking of the masses, but the moment we return to Port-au-Prince it behooves us to mention a few Haitians of class, black men of caliber—and there are scores of them. "All they need is Leaders," Norman

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Armour, American minister to Haiti, once said to us.

Our mind reverts to our friend, Sylvio Cator, two-time Olympics winner; acclaimed on the athletic fields by a million admiring whites; winned and dined as an equal in many far countries. A full-blooded black Afro-Haitian; broad nostrils, thick lips, powerful physique, an efficient, well-dressed gentleman. Yet withal a dreamer, filled with plans of impossible empire, mythical expansion for his country and people. It is not the dream through which throbs the tom-tom, but a white man's dream: the dream of a Marcus Garvey. We have listened to him many a time, as he spoke with great solemnity in good and flowery English, and have wondered how he must have felt on coming into the Land of the Free, after being a big toad in a black man's world, to be denied a first-class hotel or restaurant and remain forever de-classed as a "nigger." A man with a larger soul, a finer intelligence and a profounder reason than most of the whites we know.

It would be a revelation to most whites, for example, to visit the clubs of Port-au-Prince, not as a tourist, but as a guest.

An interlude is necessary at this juncture, to point out a curious and deplorable situation and problem. Property and wealth, power and education, are predominantly in the hands of the mulattoes. Bearing in mind that we are in a black man's country, this brings about a serious complication. The half-white half-black man is disliked, almost hated, by the all-black man. The intelligentsia who frequent the clubs are largely mixed-bloods.

Three of the principal clubs were Cercle Bellevue, Port-

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au-Prince and Union. There was more of the atmosphere of Pall Mall in the tropics than we find in our social men's clubs. Among the members we met the architect of the President's Palace, the mayor of the city, the president's brother and various other prominent citizens. Our host had received his education at Manhattan College. It was Holy Week at the time and very quiet. In the great open rooms some gentlemen were playing billiards; others, cards. Easter morning, they told me, they would go to church en masse and then bring their adult families to the club for a mammoth cocktail party! We have visited them all, and met as distinguished a group of world-wise gentlemen and diplomats as one would care to meet anywhere. The men are gentlemen in the true sense of the word, intelligent, well traveled, good listeners and storytellers, eager to learn the foreigner's point of view and always tolerant in their remarks. And they know our world as well as theirs.

And so we come to the president, the Honorable Stenio Vincent, who made the much-talked-of visit to President Roosevelt in behalf of his country. We met the president many times, but we have in mind particularly a little visit we once made him in the palace. Our audience followed that of the French minister who came out of the chamber wearing silk hat, tail coat and white gloves and made us feel a bit abashed in our white linens.

The President's Palace is several times larger than our White House and one soars up a grand staircase and passes the surveillance of a military guard. In the foyer stands the anchor of Columbus' *Santa Maria* that was wrecked off the coast. We sat for a long while and



studied the heroic bronze portrait bust of Henri Christophe, in cocked hat surmounted by curled ostrich feathers, a high collar to his velvet coat, gold leaves across his lapels, and a star decoration. A full-blooded African with a too sensitive mouth, his upper lip bowed, almost curling; his nose African flat with fairly wide nostrils, his chin full, his face sad, with determination in his deep-set eyes, a broad brow with a glint of cruelty in his expression, with ever a hint of weakness when we came back to the mouth.

At this point we came into the presence of his successor, President Vincent. He is a mild-mannered, coffee-colored little man, growing stout; a self-possessed, thinking man, with none of the cunning of Trujillo. There is an air of philanthropy about him, and a slight smile in his eyes. His surroundings were French, from the green-brocaded furniture to the French clock on the French table. He is French at heart, but has the African soul of his people. What he said on that occasion mattered little, because he was speaking *ex officio*, which means that he was only a discreet mouthpiece. Suffice it to say that, under severe handicaps, he was making a noble gesture to follow the trends of the white world, was encouraging trade treaties, making good roads and clearing slum areas and building more schools.

Again and again we return to the streets of the city, with its black natty traffic policemen (who are part of the standing army and wear identical uniforms with our marines') elaborately and technically guiding the sometimes wild traffic at busy corners, traffic that has to dodge goats all over town. A wood-turning lathe on a side

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street operated by a small boy turning a huge wheel; a few dandies togged out in Harlem elegance a bit out at the elbow, with a faint Parisian touch about them. We have to vault over the leashes of the family fighting cocks tied to the door latch; the curb marketeers, selling every conceivable merchandise from empty bottles to Socony cans; old beggars holding out their hands with a broken "Fi' cent, papa Américain!" Welcome Bar, Cold German Bier. A restauratrice seated on a Socony can. She has a tray with bananas, bread and a tin pot of bean-paste soup. A customer comes up. He wears a pleated mourning band around the left sleeve of his linen coat; he has some of the pot liquor poured over a roll. On the strength of this sale she smokes a cigarette. Boys with tubs filled with water and bottles of soda pop crying their wares. Everybody leaning on something and nibbling—bananas, sugar cane, molasses candy. "Au Smart," tailor shop; another, "Tailleur Hono Lulu."

With the emphasis we lay on sugar, we must pay our passing respects to one of the most interesting plantations in the Indies. It lies just north of the city and was once part of the crown estate of the French Louis'. All over the vast estate are the ruins of small mills on plantations parceled out to French nobles. Most astonishing of all is the irrigation system and equipment, still used after more than a century to water the cane fields. The main canal runs from the distant mountains, all neatly bricked, and in some places there are long arched viaducts carrying the water over depressions in the land. The old jungle had crept back and half claimed it when the Haitian American Sugar Company attacked it with rotary plows; they

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now employ 10,000 natives during the cutting season and half support the surrounding country. These partitioned estates were called *l'habitations*. One of these, named Sarthe, furnished Louis XV with rum for his cellars. Its bouquet became famous throughout Europe. The sugar company has revived the industry, name and all, and call their product "Rhum Sarthe."

We could ramble on for hours about Haiti and Port-au-Prince, their absorbing scenes, people and problems. We shall close with our favorite aspect—Port-au-Prince at eventide. We listen for the great Cathedral bell to toll the hour of seven in deep tones that only centuries can impart to bells. Then we stroll down that most picturesque of winding streets with its sad poetic name—Rue Toujours. In the gloaming, the way is lined with fancy and fanciful villa walls that cost more than the houses behind them. It is not far to M. Cardanne's Pharmacie. He is always there sitting on his little porch poring over *Le Temps*. As we pass, he rises and bows gallantly with a sonorous, "Bon soir, m'sieu, madame!" On by the little hole-in-the-wall, our black Blanchisserie au Lily, where we have our linen suits done up nonpareil for twenty cents. "La Garçonne," my barbershop, is sitting in force on the sidewalk; they all rise and greet us in chorus with a "Bon soir!" Then we turn and walk back to our Hotel Splendid. On the way it would seem that all Africa is passing by, an almost silent stream with padded bare feet or on their soft-footed burros, thousands of them coming down from the hills, with baskets and cans on their heads and panniers on their beasts, laden with every tropical fruit and vegetable, to insure a good place at the market at

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daybreak. We now sit on our balcony and look down on the show. It is the hour when the dogs begin to bark, the roosters to crow, the church bells of extraordinary sweetness to ring the hours, the halves and the quarters. The tree toads saw away as though their lives depend on it. And when we go to bed we can hear the throb of the tom-toms in the neighboring hills through half the night, reminding us that, come what may, Africa is at the bottom of Haiti's soul.



## Chapter Six

### LOCK AND KEY TO THE AMERICAS— PANAMA

*Jungle and Swamp—Crossroads of the World—Canal Building—American Technique—Points of Interest—Glamor and Sin—United States Naval Base*

FROM earliest days Panama has been a strategic point of attack and interest. It has always been enveloped in a cloud of romance, with ports of treasure and refuge over which brave and desperate men fought in bloody violence. For centuries, however, Panama was a baffling enigma. It stood a seemingly insignificant, yet an impassable, barrier confronting Columbus and his sweeping Conquistadors, in their projected western passage to the Orient. It was the lock and the key to the Pacific and the continent of Asia from the east and to the Americas and the Indies from the west. A narrow, unbroken neck of land binds the two continents of the New World in a life and death grip. Likewise, it is an inseparable link in the chain of our latter-day discovery of the West Indies and all the violent and motivating forces that gave them the historical backgrounds to the complex and composite character that we shall find today.

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Today, we may sit comfortably ensconced in a deck chair, and gaze over the side of a 40,000-ton floating monster, following almost precisely in the footsteps of Vasco Núñez de Balboa, the first white man to lay eyes on the Pacific Ocean. We recall that Balboa stowed away in a barrel as he fled from his creditors aboard a venturesome Spanish ship leaving Haiti. Panama then—as it is for the most part today—was an impenetrable jungle mottled with bottomless swamps. It took Balboa and his men twenty-five days of heart and body breaking toil to cover the distance that our modern leviathan spans in the course of a few hours with the aid of some donkey engines. The Indians who gave battle at every footstep of the discoverer and his band are the ancestors of those who today lie supine all over the place, offering us gewgaws for sale or begging for “Fi’ cents!” which is the *nombre d’or* of every passing American tourist.

As early as 1502—eleven years before the discovery of the Pacific—Columbus had sailed along the coast of Panama and founded the colony of Nombre de Dios. In 1519 the oldest permanent European settlement was made on the mainland of America, Old Panama City. Old Panama City owed its existence to the success of the Spaniards in spanning the isthmus with ships. They fabricated their vessels, however, and carried them in sections across on mule-back. Already, the isthmus had earned the title of “the crossroads of the world,” which it truly merits today. For Spain now shipped thither her tonnage of Inca gold from near-by Cartagena and hurried it cross-country to Panama City away from the talons of pirates and enemy warships that lay waiting offshore in the

Caribbean for the "gold fleet." Spanish galleons lay off Panama City ready to carry the treasure home via the Pacific.

No romance is more thrilling and tragic than that which surrounds the projection and building of an isthmian canal. As far back as 1550, a Portuguese navigator published a book to demonstrate that a canal could be cut through. But Spain opposed it by proclaiming that anyone seeking or making known any better route than the one between Puerto Bello and Panama City would be put to death. She controlled the isthmus as part of her armored network protecting her precious Indies. Two hundred years later a certain William Paterson's scheme came to disaster. In 1771 the Spanish government changed its policy and ordered a survey made. Political disturbances in Europe prevented any decisive action. In 1808, Alexander von Humboldt pointed out the course he thought a canal should take. In 1825 companies from both Great Britain and the United States received concessions to go ahead with the work, but nothing came of them. A Dutch corporation, in 1830, was granted a concession to dig a canal through Nicaragua, but a war at home broke off negotiations.

The completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, and its subsequent success, commercially, focused attention on Panama again. Ferdinand de Lesseps, the engineer-builder of Suez, formed a company in France. The cost was estimated at 658,000,000 francs; the time, eight years. Work continued for nine years, the management being characterized by a degree of corruption rarely if ever equaled in the world's history. There resulted a débâcle

so stupendous that it shook the entire financial world.

On our approach to the Panama Canal from the Caribbean, we shall see gouges torn in the sides of the mountains where landslides have partially covered de Lesseps' mechanical empire and with it a billion-dollar hoard of a nation's savings, and beneath it all more than a score of thousands of black navvies who died of fever in the valiant though hopeless attempt. Skeletons of giant machinery stick out like waving arms caught in a death trap, as though buried alive. This is the graveyard of one of the world's greatest exploits. A dump filled with rusty dreams buried in the cave-in of a gigantic failure. Literally, Ferdinand de Lesseps lies buried there.

Once again we are confronted with the Machine; this time the greatest machine the world has ever seen. The American success was as gigantic as de Lesseps' failure. The gist of the Yankee achievement lay in two single features of ingenuity and execution wholly neglected by de Lesseps. The first essential accomplishment is reflected in the neatly arranged government buildings, built on stilts, every aperture screened, surrounded by lawns and flower beds, where once were nothing but deadly fever-ridden jungle swamps. These swamps with their poisonous breed of insects would—and actually did!—kill off a living army of workers. The Americans simply flooded the isthmus with crude oil and then drained it. Mortality from the ancient fever scourge was thereby reduced to the zero point. In the second instance, we and our 40,000-ton leviathans are literally made to climb a mountain that still remains to hold back the ocean that would otherwise flood in and destroy the work, owing to the dif-



ference in elevation. Shipping is actually pumped up over the high tableland by means of a series of titanic locks.

There are several points of interest, none of which should be missed. There is Panama City on the Pacific, the metropolis of the early days when it was the central port of the slave traffic, its granite walls—the second strongest in the New World—bear witness to scenes of battle and tragic adventure. We go out on the promontory—beneath his monument—where Balboa and his band first looked out on the broad Pacific. It is still an Old World Spanish city with a medieval atmosphere. Likewise, it reeks with all the wickedness—real and simulated—that is to be found in any other crossroads of the world. It is not to be confused with Old Panama, but a short drive along the coast, where stand only the gaping ruins of a cathedral, churches, monasteries, forts, watchtowers and palaces, razed by Sir Henry Morgan when he sacked the city in 1671. Balboa, the Canal Zone American government city, is just that.

We return to our proper stamping ground, the Caribbean, and prepare to visit the cruise passengers' paradise and purgatory, Colón.

Cristobal, like Balboa, is just a government incubator, with little or nothing of interest. It is early evening and we find a dozen glittering ships tied up to the several huge docks unloading. The waterfront is outlined in lights like Coney Island. We hurry ashore with the herd of passengers who are all atwitter, first to get their shopping done in a "free port" and then to go hell-raising amongst Colón's notorious resorts.

It is a monster pier a half mile long, where modern en-

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gineering is moving goods and cargoes with the aid of almost human machines. We dodge long trains of automatic trucks and are shouted at—"Hey, there! Don't you see that sign: No Smoking!"—by a black policeman when we light a cigarette. At the far end we make a detour around a hundred blacks stripped to their shining waists under the 10,000-candlepower lights, loading pier' trucks with coffee, rice, sugar, molasses. We duck across the street and over the railroad tracks—what they used to call the "Whisky Line" in prohibition days—and are out of the Zone and in Colón.

Just ahead is Front Street and its hundred glittering shops, largely in the hands of Syrian shopkeepers who will permit us to bargain with them and give us the impression, should they reduce the price from \$5 to 50 cents, that we Yankees are too sharp for them and let us have the "bargain" with almost tearful protestations that we are driving them to the poorhouse. With more cunning than sympathy, we buy heavily—many, many articles that we shall regret in less glamorous moments to come. Silks and near-silks, gems and glass, perfume and watered scents; Panama hats imported from Japan, and many other Japanese imitations. There are countless real bargains, however, for those who are wise. We have been there many times, with crowds and alone, and it is always the same glamorous scene, some big shiploads leaving \$25,000 dollars on a single night.

The whole place is like a madhouse at night and the most conservative persons seem to become infected. Everybody follows the crowd, after most of them have taken their bundles of purchases back to the ship, with

a look in their eyes like pirates of old who used to walk these same streets with their pockets full of filched gold. We always picked one of the scores of horse hacks with white reins and black drivers and little bells on the dashboard. We asked our driver his name and he said, "Just David." He was one of the hundred thousand "British objects" that flocked to the bonanza that the canal proved to be, precious few of whom ever returned to their impoverished islands.

Where shall we go first? Dutch's Place—Good Eats, Good Drinks. Cantina Tropico. A stunted round-faced San Blas Indian has staggered out of Chan Ching's Cantina and fallen across our path, followed by an ugly-looking crowd led by a chocolate-colored prostitute. We elbow our way along among Panamanian blacks, sailors in white, marines in khaki, M.P.s swinging their billies and looking in every corner for drunks; ships' stewards and petty officers, prostitutes, Lascars, Japanese, Chinese, whole Indian families, stunted children and squaws walking respectfully behind their men, a group of natty Flying Corps men, South Americans, and ever and anon a bunch of gay tourists. Old negresses at the curb selling popcorn, candy, coconuts, sugar cane, limes, green bananas. Lavanderia de Yick Lee, Minerva Sandwich Shop, Competition Pawn Shop, Flor des Levantes Bar, National City Bank, Mike's Stag Bar, Sloppy Joe's Bar—Special Brew 5¢, Fonda Japonesa. Atlantic Circular Bar—around which a couple of hundred are standing uncomfortably, largely tourists, with side tables held down by hawk-eyed blondes. Screeching gramophones and shrieking radios, blare of unseen jazz bands, paroquets squawking from

cages, passing wagon bells, cries of hawkers and ballyhoo of show "spielers," a tom-tom beating around the corner, shouts of laughter.

It is time to go in somewhere. Will it be Bilgray's or the Atlantic Night Club? These particular patrons of society may no longer be in business by the time you read these words, but that will not really matter, because there are always others to take their places, and they are always the same. Or it may be the Moulin Rouge, where we pass through mysterious swinging doors past the puller-in under a glaring electric sign, all somehow suggesting Sin. Black and white bartenders, tables and dancing, with bedizened "hostesses" sitting alone and ordering drinks at the expense of the men who sit down with them. There is no color line; in fact, there is a tendency of whites to pick dark girls, and of darkies to pick white women. The whole atmosphere grows too personal as the evening advances and we are besieged by sellers of varnished alligators and bloater fish, souvenirs and postcards, so we decide to go over to the Atlantic. It is just midnight and the witching hours begin for Colón.

A genteel one-armed negro ushers us to ringside seats of the cabaret, so crowded with tables and patrons that intimacy becomes compulsory. "The Atlantic Melodians," all black, fifteen strong, with a conductor in white evening clothes. The audience numbers well over five hundred. Quotas from every ship in the harbor; whites, blacks, browns and yellows; tourists in evening clothes, the majority of men in white. Along the wall on a slight elevation, sit the "hostesses": platinum blondes, fancy mulattoes, French and Spanish girls who have no English;

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all bedizened with powder and rouge, mascara and lipstick, the lure of scent and sex heavy about their daring décolletages. It costs only a drink to invite them to dance; you may take beer at twenty cents, if you like, but no matter what they drink it is always sixty cents a drink. Every other dance is a rumba, that seems to set all the dancers wild the moment they get on the floor. In other words, everybody dances sometime and everybody goes native, wriggling their hips, jostling one another in laughing abandon, like a company of West Indianized blacks on a plantation hoedown. Reeking with sweat, hair awry, the orchestra sway and roll their eyes in ecstasy. It couldn't happen in just this manner outside the tropics, without this aura of native rum. The sitters are in an uproar, clapping hands and keeping time with their feet, swaying their heads, roaring and shrieking at the spectacle of certain dancers: the small Chinese and his white consort; the half-drunk gob and the stately mulatto hostess, he leaning backward as though in a heavy sea, she floating gracefully; the old American tourist who somehow has broken loose from mommer and the girls. Half-breed waiters flit about like wraiths in the semi-darkness of the dance. The lights go on like a blazing sun and the dancers drift back to their seats convulsed with vapid laughter over nothing, to order more drinks. There is a commotion, as three drunken sailors appear and attempt to start something and are pounced upon by the pugilistic black bouncers. A New York East Side youth on his first cruise and a honeymoon (his bride tells the neighboring tables, that he goes wild after a cacao cordial) gets up to lead the band after a planter's punch and is put down by

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the policeman with a no-fooling front; his pretty wife weeping alcoholically at this sinister revelation of the trials of married life ahead. The revue begins, the hostesses now glittering like brilliant basilisks as they realize their hours are approaching; youths gaze toward them yearningly, as do many older, grayer and balder heads, tied down by their touring families. A prim elderly lady has been engineered in by the young men escorts of the two daughters. She is given a rum swizzle and proves to be a revelation in deviltry, smoking her first cigarette and letting loose things pent up ever since she married popper, who is now dead. The master of ceremonies begs us to give a "big hand" to the little lady who sings the moaning song. We watch a dancing pair. Then the chorus comes out and does something modest and sweet, that is met with hisses. An operatic number by a tall tragic female who should never have been there at all, and she gets the "works"—catcalls, howls and banging on the tables with glasses. An oversized comedienne wearing an undersized brassière and a velvet sheath gown endeavors to be funny, but the audience is too far gone for that. Not until the funny man treads on the train of her gown, dragging it off, is the crowd appreciative of her values. A female acrobat with an allez-ooop! technique rolls on like a hoop snake. The chorus does a Naval Brigade number showing all their chunky anatomies; the world would be a better place if it had never seen them. Everybody has long since become friendly, if not intimate. Two men at neighboring tables are strangely drawn toward each other: a tourist and a Grace Line bosun. "Not from the corn belt, by any chance?" asks one as they maudlinly

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eat popcorn out of the same dish. "No, Brooklyn," responds the other. They rise and clasp hands, a strange light coming into their faces, a glint of a tear. They both come from South Brooklyn, and they are both Irish! "Father Delehanty's Parish?" "Sure!" "Did you happen to know Kelly the Scrapper?" "Me brother!" They almost embrace and nearly come to blows over paying for the next rum punch. We leave them in "the back room of Dougherty's saloon that Sunday afternoon that Madigan slugged the copper—"

Some hours later many of those who can manage it take a turn round the "district," the worst square block of infamy in the world. A continuous series of one-room cubicles, the inmate of each before the door, usually with a dog in her lap; flotsam and jetsam of the streets of the whole world, accosting passers-by in every known and unknown tongue. And so ends at least one glamorous night in Panama.

There remains a nicer and cleaner excursion in broad daylight: a motor ride through the best-groomed jungle in the Caribbean. It includes an illuminating visit to the United States army, navy, air and submarine bases; and this is an eye opener, revealing that behind all these pretty lawns, parkways, avenues and tropical gardens lies a half-hidden reservoir of power sufficient to sink a dreadnaught fleet at twenty miles. Along the way we may see at least a dozen five-foot iguanas in dead trees, dozing alligators in the sluggish stream, red-and-blue spider crabs, and finally we descend into the bowels of a submarine. For thrilling variety, Panama holds the palm of the Caribbean.



## Chapter Seven

### THE SPANISH MAIN—CARTAGENA, PUERTO COLOMBIA, BARRANQUILLA

*Sea Robbers and Land Robbers—Buccaneers and Pirates—  
A Medieval City—The Inquisition—American Boom—  
World War Relic—Permanent Siesta—American Beach-  
comber—Siesta*

THIS Caribbean Sea that now surrounds us had become the vestibule of the New World, the arena for a series of spectacles that attracted the attention and the passions of all Europe before its day was over. Sea power was everything in those days, and Spain had every advantage—superfleets of swift dreadnaughts, fortified island ports of refuge, an inexhaustible source of gold pouring out of the new Eldorado. The mainland that half surrounds the Caribbean, the Spanish Main, had to be made impregnable and held at all costs.

The Spanish Main (really meaning the mainland of New Spain) was a name applied somewhat vaguely to the northern coast of South America, from the mouth of the Orinoco all the way to Panama. Conquistadors crashed through the jungles, climbed the Andes, plowed through pestilential swamps, in their mad heroic lust for gold. The



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trails were littered with the bodies of Indian slaves and exhausted pack animals which they, in their passionate determination and will for gold, survived. All through the days and nights, for a century or more, the pack-mule trains overburdened with Inca gold and Colombian gems never paused until they had reached the shores of the Spanish Main. Here their argosies were loaded to the gunwales and then set forth on the perilous voyage to the mother country, by way of Panama, Hispaniola, or any other circuitous route that promised even a modicum of safety.

For the Caribbean was infested with robbers of the sea who intercepted these robbers of the land at every point of the compass. In the common greed for gold, the first Christian nations of the world had turned desperado, spoiler, harpy, marauder and freebooter, attacking not only ships, robbing and sinking them—often with all on board, but also sacking and pillaging island and mainland cities, putting the inhabitants to the sword. For centuries kings and queens, the church and the commonwealth, aided and abetted and shared in the profits of this wholesale spoliation, giving letters of marque, or encouraging pillage when it served their own avaricious ends.

Eventually, however, as "the greater fleas have lesser fleas on their backs to bite 'em—and so ad infinitum," there arose a new brotherhood of pelf, illegitimate and outlawed because they were in for themselves alone, who were altogether lacking in either politeness or sportsmanship in the bloody game. All this "walking the plank" and using the cutlass indiscriminately with accredited gentlemen of the cloth of gold was condemned as carrying

the joke a bit too far. This new unchartered breed of riff-raff gangsters of the sea became known and feared as pirates.

Pirates were really an outgrowth of the buccaneers, a term and a sea monster indigenous in the West Indies. The origin of the buccaneers was quite innocent—or as innocent as men could be under the terrifying, unstable and unscrupulous conditions of daily life that prevailed throughout the Indies. A vagabond crew of French and English colonists, expelled from the island of St. Kitts by the Spaniards, sought refuge and domicile on a wild part of the island of Hispaniola, gaining a livelihood as *boucans*, or *boucaniers*, as they called themselves in French, which consisted in slaughtering the wild cattle that roamed the island and preserving the flesh, an industry they had learned from the Indians. They grew in numbers and resisted the repeated attacks of the proprietary Spaniards, who in a final concerted onslaught massacred the greater part of them and drove the rest over to the neighboring island of Tortuga, smarting with vengeance. "Down with the Spaniard!" became their slogan. Partially for gain and partially in revenge, they one day attacked a treasure-laden Spanish galleon. Through their audacity—for they had only small boats—and surprise, they captured the ship. With its guns, treasure and equipment, they established an illicit enterprise that terrorized the Caribbean Sea for more than a century. They began as truly desperate men, but soon degenerated into ruthless desperadoes, roving, bold, unscrupulous and murderously savage. The little fleas became the terror of the big ones. They were no respecters of life, person or flag.

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Buccaneering began in 1630. Its ranks were rapidly augmented by individuals in search of easy gold. Dutch, French and English sailor adventurers joined up, as its fame and fearsomeness spread. Leaders of mettle arose, the most prominent being Englishmen—Mansfield and Morgan. By 1664 they had become so powerful that they conceived the idea of a permanent settlement and stronghold, choosing the Bahamian island of New Providence (Nassau, where we shall visit Blackbeard's domicile). The violent death of Mansfield brought the scheme to an end. Henry Morgan, now the pirate chief, selected Jamaica as headquarters, making the no longer existing city of Port Royal the pirate capital. They now daringly raided the mainland as well as the sea. Cuba, Puerto Rico and, above all, Puerto Bello, the treasure-receiving station of Panama. In 1671 they sacked Old Panama City accompanied by great barbarity. Occasionally they lent their aid, as mercenaries, against Spain. They reached the zenith of their power when they laid siege to Cartagena, the strongest fortified city on the Spanish Main. Finally, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, their last vestige of a united front vanished and they began falling on one another. Before they were routed off the Caribbean, however, by the united efforts of all nations, they had contributed overwhelmingly toward so crippling Spain's power in the West Indies as to hasten her decline and complete loss of control. This led to the French and English partitioning of the islands between their quarrelsome selves.

For four centuries, the Caribbean Sea was the theater of sublime acts of heroism, of brave assault and of truly

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superb defense. Today—despite its out-at-the-elbows half-breed South American lethargy and crumbling decay—Cartagena is the gem of the Caribbean.

We shall never forget our first glimpse of Cartagena as we lay in the harbor waiting for a tropical downpour to let up long enough for us to land. Rain so thick at times that we cannot see through it, wet threatening clouds floating across the heavens and dragging a heavy blanket of mist after them, at intervals emptying themselves like an overturned tarpaulin. Rain so heavy that it penetrates our very soul as we loll about under cover yet sodden through and through, waiting, listening to the chatter of the black Colombian soldier-inspectors. There is a sudden lull and we can see the huge cranes on the wharves stretching out their arms across a bright spot on the horizon. A plane begins to warm up in the near-by Andean hangar. Liners whistle hoarsely for lighters to come out and get their cargoes. Launches begin to sputter about the harbor. Passengers brighten up and throw away their cigarettes. We gird ourselves once more, ready to go down the ladder. Then, without warning, comes the deluge again. Nothing to fret about really, but just an incident in the rainy season in the tropics, when more often than not there is a silver lining to the darkest cloud. Ours shows itself a few minutes later, when the mist is shoved aside like a gauze curtain and we behold one of the rarest, most imposing and most significant spectacles in the New World. A long thin strip of palm-studded shore surrounds the harbor, except in the center, out of which rises a medieval city of Spain in all its primal splendor. A great Cathedral with yellow dome, nave and cupolas;

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an even taller red-and-white-roofed ancient tower near by; the double towers of the Jesuit Church; the sprawling monastery. Sixteenth-century houses and palaces, of light brick with red-tiled roofs, some nearly doubled up with age, giving an almost Venetian aspect to the skyline, yet no less Spanish or less beautiful than that of Santiago de Compostela; La Popa Castle, the Palace of the Inquisition, and the towers of more churches. On a separate promontory the ruins of the Convent of Nuestra Señora de Popa, with its legends of miraculous cures that bring a continuous flow of devout pilgrims. All still surrounded with the wall of the city, in some places forty feet thick. And above all, the greatest fortress in the New World that took 300,000 slaves 27 years to construct. Once clearly seen, the whole becomes lovelier behind a thin curtain of mist, turning into a haunting picture behind a beaded curtain of rain.

Once again it clears and this time for hours. We file down to our waiting tender, nosing our way among the native dugouts filled with black boys using paddles as big and as round as a griddle, some bailing out the rain with gourds, others standing poised ready to dive, shouting, "Hey, monee! Hey, monee, monee!" keeping an ever-watchful eye seaward, for on a rainy day like this not long ago a ten-foot shark stole in and got a leg of one of them. In one canoe sprawl three different colors: black, brown and white, plainly indicating that we are now in South America, and not in the all-black Indies. Three or four dive overboard like cormorants the instant a coin is thrown into the water, and always one of them brings it up, holding it in his mouth for safekeeping. A lone pelican wings

his way overhead, knowing that this is good fishing weather. There, he dives straight down and brings up two fish, one half hanging from his bucket of a mouth. He is followed by a frigate bird like a bony bat, his tail split like a fish's. He, too, goes fishing, scattering brown gulls that have been bobbing atop the tide in noisy session. Finally, we land on Drake Spit, at the exact spot where Sir Francis and his piratical crew landed when they came in 1585. They captured the city and held it for an enormous ransom. The varied, paradoxical panorama that is Cartagena's has few equals, with its magnificent winding streets and fortresslike but palatial houses where once dwelt and paraded proud Spanish nobles and some of the richest potentates of their day. The city is in a remarkable state of preservation; although it may now have gone to the dogs literally, it requires little imagination to see that the Cartagenos successfully vied with the richest cities of sixteenth-century Spain. Glassless windows, each with its original grille pattern, as beautiful as a street in Ronda, handsome doorways; rich wrought-iron grilles leading to Moorish patios wherein, Spanish fashion, all the life of the household still takes place.

We drive halfway to the top of the superb fortress, connected with the Old Town by marvelous tunnels, actually miles in length, that zigzag with geometrical precision, once offering citizens a refuge during the frequent sieges. We actually climb one of these long tunnels, used to remove the ecclesiastical treasures and relics, and come out near the high altar of the Cathedral. We pass through one street of former mansions that was paved three hundred years ago. In the beautiful and recently rebuilt

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Basilica of St. Peter Claver we scan the fantastic effigy of the patron saint in a lighted showcase beneath the altar. The crumbling cloisters outside are a lovely relic of Old Spain. It is a half-neglected garden of palms, vines and other tropical verdure, the noble arches alive with lizards and soft green moss binding the wounds of time. Above the high walls are still some of the monks in their cells. Cartagena must have been a jewel in the Pope's crown in those olden days when a large part of all the wealth and energy was devoted to religious structures, especially here where the passing of nearly all the gold of New Spain made it the envy of pirates and marauding nations. Even the cruelties of the Inquisition were rigidly carried out in Cartagena. The Inquisition chamber still stands adorned by a magnificent doorway, although the interior with all its gruesome reminders of the "works" was destroyed by the revolutionary mob. It seems but little changed on Candlemas when the whole city—Spaniards and mixed-bloods, Indians and Africans—troops up to the retreat on the mountainside carrying lighted candles!

The prison, another ancient ecclesiastical palace, gone the way of all noble flesh and mortar in New Spain, was typical. Nearly all the prisoners come running to the barred wall—barefoot, ragged; none really evil-looking, although some obviously troubled with insanity. When told that we want to buy something, they all rush off to get their products, for they are allowed to keep half the proceeds. There is a snarling competition with their canes, riding crops, penholders, horn boxes and woodcarving. We buy two canes from an amiable young murderer who becomes our friend for life. There is no capital punish-

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ment here, so he is serving the maximum penalty of twenty years, because he couldn't afford an influential lawyer who always gets them off with a sentence of ten years, six years deducted for good behavior. They get very tired of staying here, he told us, and the government also gets tired of supporting them, so when they climb the fence nobody really bothers very much about it. Many of them escape for a while and then are glad to climb back again. In the great open patio there were still remnants of its sacred past in stone. The nuns' cells were housing the more miserable of the lot. We peered through a battered grilled gate into the once lovely garden where the nuns had walked in holy contemplation. In the remains of the pavilion two guards with guns sat half sleeping, surrounded by jungle weeds and desolation. All the rest of the beauty, the glory and the holiness have been turned to dross, filth and waste, more especially the human deterioration.

The former dungeons beneath the city walls had been converted into the poorhouse, one family to each cell.

A city with traffic lights—and rows of buzzards, that are the only scavengers, along the housetops. Everything is explained by our dark driver, Leo Fuchs. His father was a German trader and his mother an Indian-black, and he speaks with a Jamaican accent. The cockpit and the bull ring stand out prominently in the fascinating panorama. There are cockfights every Sunday and bullfights during January and February. Dancing black boys, if they fail in selling us lottery tickets and in all other wiles of getting money, cry, "Fredo! Fredo!" and shiver professionally. To which one tourist lady retorts, "Well, if you're



so cold, why don't you go home and put on some clothes!" For they were dancing in trunks—and it was broiling hot. The Opera House was truly "grand," a poor copy of the one in Madrid, and Zymbalist had been there a few months before. But the big movie house was the more popular entertainment.

From the ship's deck we watched the sun go down on Cartagena, the waters indigo, the sun a brazen shield, and Cartagena—with all its lovely towers, domes and palaces—sharply silhouetted against the silver-streaked sky.

Our next port of call on the Spanish Main has little or no historical interest. However, Puerto Colombia and Barranquilla, its not-distant metropolis, furnish two interesting examples of the evolution of New Spain—its deterioration, if you will—from the magnificence and brilliant sophistication of the one-time Cartagena, governed and administrated—albeit tyrannically—by a high-bred, intelligent and cruelly efficient Spanish aristocracy, to the lackadaisical lassitude of a New World hybrid democracy; perhaps we should say a continuous succession of revolutionary dictatorships. This intermediate act, in the projected drama, and the sad awakening from the sixteenth-century dreams of a Greater Spanish Empire, is catastrophic.

As we were warped in to the steel pier that extends fully a mile out into the shallow harbor of Puerto Colombia, we were somewhat astonished at this example of expensive modern engineering, and turned to the Skipper. "Well, I believe the Dutch came to this spot first," he explained. "The Spanish came along and chased them out. Then

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along came American capitalists and chased everybody else out!" We are to see more evidence of the American "boom"—that went broke—on all sides. The pier was intended as the final blow to Cartagena and all further ambitions of its revival as an important port, and also to take care of the liners and freighters that would soon crowd the harbor. For, on paper, Puerto Colombia was in a few years to become one of the great ports of the world. Like their predecessors and all-time commercial rivals, the Americans smelled the rich deposits of gold and precious stones, oil and ores, that still lie buried in the scarcely touched jungles and mountains of fabulous Colombia. The same old story.

The only other vessel in the harbor at the moment is lying at the bottom; the remains of a German warship self-sunk during the World War, with only its turret visible, and this is being used as an emergency lighthouse. The only traffic using the elaborate system of rails that come out to the very end of the pier is a dinky ante-diluvian shuttle car for the use of those passengers who do not care to walk to shore. The charge is twenty-five cents a trip. This creakingly brings us to the entrance of the Lido Bar, where "Man spricht Deutsch," as though that were necessary in asking for a glass of warmish beer.

Here one has to reckon with El Comandante, a huge man of indeterminate color in an official helmet; his face and hands are covered with red freckles, as though he had stood next to a pot of paint into which someone had thrown a stone. One would say offhand that he was Irish, but one would have to say it in Spanish for he "had no

English." An odd assortment of natives have come down—as natives all over the world do, from New York to Cairo—to see the boat come in and to marvel at the curious foreigners. Black people, tan Indians, black-and-tan mixed, heehawing donkeys and strutting buzzards. The only huzza of welcome is a chorus of, "Cinqua peso! Cinqua peso!"—the equivalent of New York's "Gimme a nickel!" We shall hear this ten thousand times before we get back to our ship, from the lips of all Seven Ages of Man, uttered with hand extended but no note of goodwill. A score of boys, sitting on donkeys, their bare feet crossed on the animals' necks, have small casks as panniers. They are the city waterworks, helping to solve the eternal water problem of the town. Puerto Colombia itself is mostly a clutter of shanties. The less said about that, and the seventeen-mile drive to Barranquilla, the better.

From the moment we pay thirty cents toll and move from the rutty country highway to the macadam streets of Barranquilla, we begin to see astounding signs of the "boom," which was deflated during the Crash of '29, leaving the town flat. There was a perfectly legitimate side to the Barranquilla boom. The Magdalena River, logical outlet and inlet for the distant capital, Bogotá, and the whole back country, came right up to the city's doorstep, dumping its considerable commerce on the mat. There it stopped, on a sand bar that blocked its way to the sea and kept it from becoming a world port. The Big American Capital Idea—which everybody else had dreamed about for centuries—was to remove the sand bar. Wall Street was given the signal and American boob capital poured

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in, the government furnished the construction company more than five million dollars; the world crashed, the work stopped, the sand flowed back into the channel. Barranquilla heaved a sigh and resumed its age-old siesta. The suburbs were strewn with pretty wreckage: Venetian palaces, pink stucco mansions, Taj Mahal villas. Some were completely finished and then boarded up, others were only halfway up, and many were just holes in the ground. The shining monument of all was the really swanky Hotel Prado that awaited visiting capitalists and potentates and today assures tourists and travelers of all that they can desire of service and hospitality, in a fascinating land where there is so little of it.

Going about Barranquilla with one's eyes open is equivalent to looking through a kaleidoscope, and no less pleasing to those who like to see life in all its shapes and colors momentarily changing into incredible patterns.

Barranquilla is a city of 150,000 and has many of the appurtenances of a modern metropolis. When we hire a new American car, our tour is delayed because a man is trying to sell us a live kid, which he shoves bleating into our arms. Our chauffeur saves the day by dashing down the ill-paved main street, straight past a traffic light while the bell is ringing its warning signal. A large sign proclaims a fine of \$5 for this offense, but, fortunately, the nearest khaki-clad traffic cop is leaning heavily against a pillar and does not see the affair. We slink away in the direction of the Cathedral, which we hastily enter through a pair of half doors suspiciously like those of our old-time saloon. We are let in by two small boys who dance in front of us with extended hands, yelling "Cinqua cent!"

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The façade of the building is new and ornate Gothic, but inside we find an exotic charm, that is half Indian, expressed in curious frescoes of gold, pale blue and rose. Our chauffeur stands contemplating the upper air through the barred windows, puffing a cigarette despite the holiness of place, while we sink into a rude pew and listen to a monk playing on a small organ in the shadows with an exquisite feeling that seems to bring out its whole original religious idea and history in a series of expressive chords. Even our chauffeur throws his cigarette on the church floor and crushes it with his foot in deep respect.

Donkeys everywhere, loaded with wood or that equally precious elemental commodity, water. Tortilla and hokey-pokey carts painted in all colors of the rainbow. Side streets in a state of disrepair that is good for the livers of those who can afford a motor car, for the boom never got that far.

Our real treat in humanity comes after we dismiss the car and are entering the great Public Market, a gem of its kind. We are accosted by a hungry-looking, threadbare American who volunteers to show us the town. We are glad, for many reasons. En route, he tells us his story in dribblets. He was a window dresser! He had been graduated from a correspondence school just in time to learn of the Great Barranquilla Boom. What a chance for a master window dresser! He shipped as a steward and arrived with \$40 in his pocket. These Barranquillanos had laughed at his mere suggestion of "dressing" their windows. How could they put all their goods in the window if they permitted him to doll it up like a gigolo? The boom came and went, and the outgoing tide left him on the

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rocks with the others. But he had managed somehow. He had a funny little room with a native family and food was cheap, if not plentiful. That became obvious from the way he ravenously ate a bag of papayas that we bought in the market. The first time he actually laughed, however, was when the blond wife of the fat tourist merchant from New York bought out the chewing gum vendor for two dollars. She had run out of gum and was willing to pay any price for a new lot.

Everything under the Colombian sun, it seemed, was spread out for purchase: tiny toy furniture sets skillfully woven of native rushes, imitation and real Panama hats, fresh coconut milk, *zapatos*, or native straw pushers, strips of lottery tickets, cemetery wreaths made of green paper leaves and wax flowers—to mention but a few of the oddities. A row of black mammies offering quick lunch delicacies—rice and coconut milk iced and mixed with chromatic colored syrups, fried mysteries, corn mush cakes, native nut-and-molasses candies. One persistent fellow pursued us all through the market with a wire rattrap, “Made in U.S.A.,” which he was willing to sell cheap, at triple the price for which we could buy it at home. And, finally, our man with the live kid found us again and hung on till the last. Our window dresser did all the bargaining for us. In each instance, a crowd of persons, seemingly awaiting an opportunity to do anything that required no physical effort, would gather round and begin to take sides with the gesticulating merchant, whom we were trying to patronize and beat down from his too high price at the same time. There would always be a dramatic scene, followed by a compromise, the vendor crying out to the

crowd that he had been robbed by the rich Americanos.

We passed on into the fish market, which for strongness of smell is equaled only by the soukhs of Morocco. It was worth the struggle, however, if only to see the odd assortment of sea monsters that the Barranquillanos evidently relish. The market was supplied by a fleet of small fishing craft that sailed right up the Magdalena River, at the market's back door. In the river harbor we found a great huddle of the Mississippi River type of shallow-draft back-paddle-wheel steamers that plied several hundred miles upstream.

We left the markets and were just about to explore more of the streets when the whole town shut up like a trap, with a banging of iron bars and a pulling down of corrugated shutters, and we found ourselves on the streets with no place to go. It was the siesta, our friend explained, assuring us that the cafés were open. This sounded better than it afterwards tasted. *Arroz con pollo* and warm beer and, finally, fiery rum taken in desperation, did not altogether solace us. We had some diversion, however, when a half-breed beachcomber at another table joined us without invitation and over our rum proceeded to give us the lowdown about both ourselves and Colombia.

He said, in effect, that Colombia had enough gold under her ground to put the whole world on the gold standard, but she prefers to depress her currency to make a favorable export market. Everybody is holding onto American dollars to buy. Yet, they distrust Americanos. They look upon them much the same as the Americano looks upon the Oriental. American methods of high-pressure industry, for example, make Colombian competition impossible.

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The Yankees are endowed with too much energy, too much competence, too much efficiency and too much dreadful driving power. They are unfair. They take no siesta and talk business over their meals. They do not play the game—from a tropical viewpoint!

His argument seemed unanswerable, so we hurried away and left him brooding in his cups. Through ill-paved streets of one-story houses of all the pastel shades, with curious women, Moresque-Spanish style, peeping out of beautifully grilled windows. Once, our car was held up by a cow, whether lost or just visiting town and seeing the sights, no one seemed to know or care. Everywhere strange fruits and vegetables on display; women carrying burdens on their heads and wearing their hair Indian style with one braid over each shoulder; charcoal vendors musically calling their wares. Our arrival at the river's edge was timed to see a Pan American clipper ship descend like a great bird and then taxi to shore.

While everyone might not share the window dresser's enthusiasm and want to live there, yet there was a certain fascination and thrill that made one glad to have seen it all, for one would have to go far to see its equal. Like the blacks, these people seem to have little or no ambition, but they are highly endowed with a rare gift of imagination and a flair for being content with little, that passes our understanding. We saw it all symbolized in our last look over the side of the liner, down upon the boomtime pier at Puerto Colombia. There was a native half-breed with his traveling café serving a customer as though he were the Ritz Bar. He carried two baskets. Will you have coffee? He takes a spoonful from a tin



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box, and puts it into a cup and pours on it boiling water from a thermos bottle. Cigars or cigarettes?

This is the modern Spanish Main—all that is left of Spain's grandiose schemes, bloody conquest and filched gold!



## Chapter Eight

### THE KINGDOM OF RUMBULLION— JAMAICA

*Life on the Estates—The Savior of Jamaica—Contrasting  
Interests—Spanish Town—Black Population—Port Royal—  
Street Scenes*

NIGHT was sinking over the tropical sea like a velvet drapery. The entire west was solidly barricaded with clouds; first reflecting the gold of the sun, becoming angrily crimson as it disappeared, growing purple and then black. A vivid night, known only to desert and sea, enveloped us, with a million stars sparkling in its deep-blue canopy; a silvery moon rising and dipping into the sea with the rocking of the boat, the rippling waters shattering its reflected face into a thousand fragments. A new galaxy of night clouds appeared—dainty, dancing, like silver gauze, scudding about the sky and mischievously throwing filmy scarves over the face of the staring moon. Unfathomable waters immediately surrounding the ship lighted with mysterious phosphorescence at the least disturbance, as though Neptune's watchmen were flashing their lanterns undersea. Suddenly an island

stood boldly silhouetted against the face of the moon. . . .

"That's Jamaica!" said our companion vibrantly. He had been standing beside us at the rail for more than an hour, absorbed in the pageantry of the tropical night. This gentleman had been born on the island and was returning after his first trip away from it. He had been "Home," to England. To him, the world revolved around Jamaica. Only Britain herself could equal—though not surpass—it. Jamaica was his homeland. Horses and cattle were his line. He had a big stock farm some eighty miles inland in the neighborhood of Mandeville; high up in the hills. In a nostalgic way, he told us all about the "little" life of the colonials, to which he was happily returning.

"Some of my negroes have been in the family since before I was born—slaves then, of course. We shall take care of them always for we still own them, you might say. Now they are paid for their work—seven shillings or so a week—and we feed and clothe them. When they were freed many of them bought their own acre and built homes, and became self-supporting. These simple folk require little in Jamaica. The climate and the soil support the laziest negro. They can live largely on casabas, and take to market other things they grow to barter for practically everything else they need. We watch out that nothing really serious happens to them. For example, they like to build their huts in the coulees of the Blue Mountains—just wait until you get acquainted with our beautiful Blue Mountains that rise majestically more than seven thousand feet and form a backbone of temperate zone that stretches halfway down the coast! In the rainy

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seasons—April and May, October and November—those coulees become perilous, owing to rushing torrents, for we sometimes have a rainfall of twenty-four inches in twenty-four hours! Then a wall of water sweeps down the ravines carrying everything before it, often drowning many black squatters.”

He went on to describe the comforts and dignity of the “county” life, as the English would call it. He talked of formal calls, hunting parties, of riding among the hills, croquet and tennis and cricket, of the tea hour and bridge with whisky-and-soda, of movies and golf for those near the larger towns. This is the life of the gentry on estates handed down for generations by original settlers, with their manorial homes and hosts of black retainers. . . .

Aboard ship was another group of people whose Jamaica was quite a different place. They prattled of Montego Bay and its Casa Blanca, of Constant Spring and its eighteen-hole golf course, of Falmouth, and the fashionable life and gay parties at these resorts. Perhaps they would stop over a few nights in Kingston, if only to enjoy the luxury and the incomparable planter’s punch in the luxuriant gardens of the Myrtle Bank, where they would probably meet “Sir Harry and Lady So-and-so.” Last time they had gorged on calalu soup, salt fish seasoned with pickapeppa, wild turkey, rice and red peas, chochos in butter, baked plantains and coconut cream, finishing off with Blue Mountain coffee, goat cheese and soursop liqueur. They would probably trip around to the Glass Bucket and dance on its enormous floor under a thatched roof; or maybe to the Silver Slipper. To them Jamaica

was just one grand tropical resort, worthy of the Blue Book.

Our tablemate on the voyage, who had been coming to Jamaica for twenty consecutive years, seemed quite ignorant of either of these Jamaicas. He was a rum buyer and drinker. He showed us the town—his town! It revealed a side of Kingston not generally known, or cared about. He proved to us conclusively that Kingston is the rum capital of the world, especially when he introduced us to Mr. Lindo, the “Rum King,” who in turn took us to his concrete government-bonded warehouses, where we walked for nearly an hour between rows of 10,000-gallon vats containing more than a million and a half gallons of rum! We prowled around the great warehouses on Harbor Street, that have stood from rumtime immemorial, every rafter soaked and preserved in the fumes of rum. The characteristic bouquet and odor of the rum is molasses, and that is their talking and selling point. Jamaica is not so much a sugar island as it is one of sugar cane converted into rum. Rum is the savior of Jamaica, not bananas, so they argue. Why, one can buy raw “nigger rum” for less than a shilling a bottle; a penny-ha’penny a glass. “A fight in every drink.” Why, the blacks are brought up on rum—the mammies drink deeply of it in child-labor, the babies are dosed with it when they are sick, adults drink it to keep well and, finally, they all join in one grand drinking bout when one of their number dies. In pirate days, it was the common prescription for all ailments, from fever to the plague; the mainstay of the buccaneer personnel and morale. In fact, an overdose of it often led to a bloody mutiny that sent all hands to Davy Jones’s locker.

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We saw one or two blacks who had gone crazy in the same way, when we made the round of the pubs. There were all-black saloons and all-whites: Jim Dandy—Licensed—Gin, Rum & Other Sperretts; Charley's Punch Bowl; Movies Bar; Grouse Saloon; Lion Bar; Yap Yung—Groceries and Spirits. Only in Jamaica did we see the abuse of rum, by the native islanders.

There is infinitely more to Kingston—to the whole of Jamaica, for that matter—than may be culled from the conversation and random experiences of a few ship companions, each one passionately intent on seeking the things that interest only him or her.

Offhand, we should say that, of all the islands of the Caribbean, Jamaica offers foreign visitors the widest variety of interests. From a typical and lively West Indian metropolis under the suave and efficient administration of British officialdom in Kingston, one may pass through Deep Africa with a bit of the wildest jungle thrown in. It is these vivid contrasts that fascinate one. The influence of England may dominate, even to an occasional Oxford accent from a ragged black man. Beneath it all, however, are to be found traces of Old Spain. Externally, Spanish Town has the feel of Spain. Nor can anything dim the tropical grandeur that caused Columbus to call Jamaica "the world's most beautiful isle." As the rendezvous for the buccaneers, the island has been invested with an aura of romance.

Nevertheless, Jamaica is the blackest of the British Indies: 20,000 whites; 18,000 East Indians; 1,025,000 blacks. It is the undertones and overtones of Africa that rise above all others. Unlike Haiti, where the blacks also

predominate on an island, the Jamaicans carry the white man's burden, yet they have not the Haitians' more irksome burden of self-government; therefore, they are really the happier of the two peoples. There is a not-unhappy atmosphere of the slave days, without the odium of slavery. The natives are content and proud to be British subjects and to exercise their British superiority on all others of their race. They revel in their Black Britain. They have their cricket and Thames boating costumes, their black bobbies with swagger sticks and white helmets. "Commit No Nuisance—Any Person Found Doing So Will Be Prosecuted." "Buy British!" "No Smoking or Naked Lights Allowed." London Store. Dunne—Lock-Up Store. Humming Bird Cigarettes. "Buses Stop Here If Required." Mayfair Library. And that sign posted in the tram: "I am the Motorman, and I require all my wits to run this tram.—Be so kind as to Observe." . . . All so delightfully British, and they love it. They have not yet learned that fatal fascination to become equals in a white man's world; the passion of a moth futilely beating its wings against the glass barrier before the candle of a forbidden sphere. In Jamaica, the lines and limitations between black and white are as fixed as the stars. We thought these things, as we stood before the rather luxurious villa of Marcus Garvey, their one-time "Deliverer" and "Emperor Jones," on the outskirts of Kingston. "Yes, sir, they still call him the Nigger Moses," our black chauffeur informed us with a doubtful shake of the head. "He had quite a following among the niggers round yere, but needer one keeps it goin'."

An island of moods and fancies. Rough and rugged up-

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lands, open cattle country, rich agricultural districts with thriving sugar and banana plantations, as well as flat swampy jungles. A marvelous seacoast with glorious lagoon harbors and coral-sand bathing beaches that offer a Palm Beach and a Miami in the depth of the tropics, with all the fashionable life and sports that go with other famous watering resorts of the world.

Nowhere else in the Indies can there be found more gorgeous and tropical growths in a day's drive. One may see it all, however, in miniature in the neighborhood of Bog Walk, only a half hour out of Kingston; or, more formally, in the Hope Botanical Gardens. We explored romantic Kingston and its environs, and followed the trails of pirate chieftains and marauders of the Spanish Main, from Port Royal to Gallows Point, where the last pirate was hung.

Then, happily, we made the acquaintance of old Nicholas—"The Old Nick," he said they call him—and together we saw another Kingston, through the eyes of its black people.

Nicholas was my guide and boatman, for example, on my first trip over the bay to Port Royal, where once had stood a city that outrivalled Kingston—if not every other city in all the West Indies—for riches, gaiety and wickedness. In the midst of its greatest infamy and prosperity—on June 17, 1692—it was destroyed by an earthquake. Without warning, its 10,000 inhabitants and 3,000 houses, its cathedral and palaces, its priceless booty, slipped into the sea and were nevermore seen. Not according to Nicholas, however. As we paused in his little boat, just above where Port Royal is supposed to have stood, he



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said, pointing into the waters, "Dere she is!" I could see nothing, but he contended that he could clearly make out the whole city of Port Royal standing upright, just as it had gone down to the bottom of the sea nearly 250 years ago, save that everything was beautifully veneered with coral! Had I doubted Nicholas at that moment, our friendship would never have ripened. He went on to relate that on stormy nights, when the wind and waves rock the sea, he and all his black neighbors can plainly hear the cathedral bells of Port Royal ringing loudly, recklessly—and they think of the unhappy "ghosteses" of that lost city and hastily say their prayers.

Thereafter, Nicholas adopted me as a peripatetic master. There was a perfect understanding, with neither familiarity nor demarcation, between us. As a protégé of Nicholas we were allowed many privileges that would otherwise have been considered impertinence on the part of Yankee "white folks."

Once we rowed out among the school of half-naked black boys swarming dexterously around incoming steamers in their long narrow boats, offering for sale green grapefruit, oranges, bananas and plantain, offering to dive for any money except copper coins.

Or, we would take a stroll up picturesque King Street—for all the world like a typical American jerkwater Main Street miraculously gone tropical with a British accent. At Charley's Punch Bowl we might refresh ourselves with a knockout rum drink called "the devil's breath." The War Eagle would sell us "dainty underthings." The Emmanuel Apostolic Tabernacle has the Salvation Army barracks for its neighbor. Sasso & Miller's "Spacious,

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Cool and Well-Lighted Store" extends a hearty welcome to us and "guarantees to please the most fastidious." Nicholas and ourself dropped in at the latter, because the colored head clerk was a friend of his, and we were measured for a linen suit to order, to be ready the following day, at two pounds sterling.

We were introduced to the dusky traffic policeman at the corner, who saluted us and addressed us as "doctor." He wore a white helmet and a natty British marine uniform, and directed traffic with lofty and solemn dignity and the aid of a swagger stick. Once acquired, Nicholas said, this brass-button decorum is never relaxed by a darky, even in the bosom of his family. A busy thoroughfare: old mammies in Mother Hubbards offering us green sugar cane to munch, peddling colored gourds or carrying a floppy grass hat in either hand; flashy young "yaller gals" wearing tan stockings to match their complexions, and other modes copied from the movies, but inevitably going African in some gaudy detail; rows of native girls sitting before a board counter or with glass showcases on their knees, selling unfamiliar fruits and homemade molasses candies interlarded with strange native nuts. The whole scene was like a soft-voiced slow-motion picture. Nearly every street merchant was leaning or lolling on something; some of them fast asleep. Through it all occasionally stalked England, pure and simple, in the form of a lanky, shoebrush-mustached British official or something-or-other, to whom and for whom no one and nothing exists except the British "Empahr."

Toward evening, however, a subtle brooding change began to spread over the town, over the whole island. One

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by one, the white-fronted shops along King Street closed, the swanky white-helmeted black traffic cops left their posts. Only the rumholes along Harbor Street showed signs of active life, an insensate overtone of degraded life that repelled decent folk. Even the white stragglers sitting out the twilight hour in the park near the government buildings withdrew. Like the Arabs, the white folks of Kingston's "downtown" seemed to have folded their tents and silently stole into the brightly lighted circles of their own world.

Not so with Kingston's black world. Darkness seemed to bring them out in swarms and droves. They thronged the main thoroughfares that led out in the direction of Spanish Town. The narrow street was crowded from curb to curb. All the languor of the midday tropical sun had given place to a carefree gaiety. They talked loudly, they laughed and sang. The girls flirted furiously and dandies strutted like mating turkey gobblers. Whether they had been shy or ashamed in the white man's daylight world, would be hard to say. Now in the dim light and the darkness they were themselves. The whole world for them had turned black.

Could this be a carnival? we asked. No, this was the regular thing every night, Nicholas assured us. At every corner were little carts, painted in gaudy colors, some made into "chariots" by the fanciful genius of their proprietors. Some were purveyors of the popular "snowballs," small balls of shaved ice at a penny a ball, transformed into any brilliant color chosen from a score of bottles of synthetically colored syrup. But many of the charioteers were bootleggers of what the white folks call "monkey rum,"

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a low-grade, high-powered liquor that often fills black drinkers with a desire to climb trees, said Nicholas. Every little wagon had an alluring title painted on its side: "Easy Girl," "Simple Boy," "All Alone," "Buy Me," "Aristocratic." Old negresses squatted along the edge of the curb or moved among the crowd with trays of sweets. Two garish movie houses and a gambling "grove" filled with penny games of chance added to the gaiety. Night life seemed just one grand merry-go-round to these darkies, having a continuous good time that their white masters seldom even approximated.

We had walked out to the end of the lighted streets. Personally, we were for going deeper into the night, for the road beyond was still alive with strollers—sparkling, laughing, happy; half of them chewing on green stalks of sugar cane. There was a softer note out there in the darkness, utterly strange to our ear and spirit. Cabins took on the contour of African huts, with always a dusky group around a kerosene flare or a fire in the open. We reached a space on the open sea where we could look back through the fronds of the palms and see the lights of the city strangely reflected in the depths of the Caribbean. Behind us loomed the Blue Mountains, with here and there a fire burning on a hilltop. Banana plantations began to line the side of the road for miles. Suddenly, we became aware of the symphony of the jungle—a whirring of great bats in the half-darkness, the mournful singing of thousands of tree frogs, a sobbing and piping of invisible birds as they protested against being disturbed.

At length, the brooding spirit of it all oppressed us with a fear that bordered on terror. We turned to Nicholas,

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who we knew had been uneasy for some time. "Come, Nicholas, let's get back!" We walked as fast as we could.

We meant, back to civilization. While it was true that we had discovered a Jamaica known to few foreigners and had reveled in it, we had finally got enough of it. We were more than ready to return to the white man's civilization, to the Jamaica that nearly everybody knows—together one of the most fascinating islands in all the Caribbean.



## Chapter Nine

### SUGAR BOWL OF THE WORLD—CUBA

*Attitude toward the United States—Tobacco and Sugar—  
Lovely Havana—Ecclesiastical Treasures—Funeral Pag-  
eantry—Political Unrest—Social Strata—Night Life*

CUBA is the problem stepchild of the United States and a perpetual paradox. While Cuba owes her very existence as a nation to the United States, her gratitude and friendliness have been of a most doubtful character. The island is the nearest in point of physical contact, but probably the farthest in the matter of spiritual union. No other nation, perhaps, have we aided so constructively, and been rewarded with so much distrust and lack of confidence. None have we more favored with our friendship, only to arouse an irritation often bordering on hatred. More tourists probably have visited Havana than any other island metropolis, coming away with a profound knowledge of its night life but with scarcely an inkling of its daily life. Something seems to be all wrong somewhere.

A number of well-defined causes can be found for many of these abysmal breaches between the people of the United States and those of Cuba, several so deeply imbedded in the very fabric of race and society and our

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intrinsically different ideas of the values of their structure and progenitors. These fundamental fissures of misunderstanding, unfortunately, can never be successfully bridged so long as an American continues to be an American, and a Cuban a Spaniard. There are many instances like this, for example, when we Americans and our government agents become such unthinkably jovial bulls in other peoples' china shops filled with most precious and fragile idealisms and traditions, when the spectacle turns into tragicomedy. Certain elements in Cuba have always contended that it is the United States alone, through its governmental interference, its political meddling and its capitalistic coercion, that has eventually metamorphosed "the Pearl of the Antilles" into another ridiculous White Elephant of the Caribbean. As usual, our intentions were good and our aims magnanimous. We gave of our men, money and ammunition, with all the fervor of wartime patriotism. Nearly a quarter of a million American volunteers left their businesses, homes and families, and several thousands of them never returned. The inevitable "incident," or explosive pretext, for which belligerent nations always wait expectantly in the codified etiquette of war—like Fort Sumter and the *Lusitania*—was the sinking of the battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor. To this day nobody knows how the *Maine* was blown up. We blamed Spain. Overnight she became our implacable "enemy" and hostilities began. Uncle Sam took his first stride forcefully and forcibly into the West Indies.

Say what we may, the West Indies played nearly as epochal a part, in 1898, in the fortunes, prestige and future of the United States of America as it had, in 1492,

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with Spain. Spain, the last vestige of whose glorious western empire was wiped out of existence, setting her down, in utter defeat, to the ignominious position of a barely second-rate power. Cuba, her Spanish blood adulterated many times, and separated by distance and successful rebellion from the motherland, will never wholly forgive the Americans for administering that deathblow. Such is the enduring and complex character of Spanish blood, which we shall meet again in more significant and closer contact and conflict in our Spanish-West Indian "possession," Puerto Rico.

Cuba from end to end is a glorious island, differing in temperature, temper and temperament from all the other islands. In the former, she is slightly cooler than her sister islands; in the latter respects, she is considerably hotter. In agriculture, she commercially surpasses them all, with particular reference to sugar and tobacco. In the cultivation of tobacco, her soil and climate combine to raise what is generally conceded to be the finest quality in the world. Like that of all the other islands, her sugar trade has suffered acutely from overproduction; that of cigars has felt the pinch of world poverty and the high-pressure sales method of the cigarette manufacturers, which seems to have turned the modern world into inveterate cigarette smokers. Being by nature, habit and political bent fiery revolutionists, it requires but little widespread pressure on the populace—a general financial débâcle, followed by poverty and hunger, for instance—and soapbox agitation to bring them to a state of fierce rebellion, to be repeated again and again. All of this is truly and natively "Spanish American."



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Havana is typical; typical of Cuba, of Spain, of the West Indies, of Spanish America. In addition, Havana is an amazingly cosmopolitan city. The chair and table strewn boulevards of Paris; sections of the Great White Way of New York; the dives and houses of assignation that are said once to have flourished in Buenos Aires; a replica of the Capitol at Washington—only higher, as we are informed many times; the Orient, with a Chinatown of 25,000 celestials. A city that is never dull. Like a lusciously ripe fruit, with possibly a few unpalatable specks to be avoided and seeds to be spat out. Finally, world travelers with an eye for beauty, acclaim it to be one of the loveliest cities in the world. Its variety is so bewildering that only a panorama will serve in the limited space of a chapter, leaving the prospective reader or traveler to peruse or penetrate its ramifications at will.

On looking back, it seems that Havana has always burst on our vision unexpectedly. From the harbor, a magnificent spectacle of a palatial tropical Spanish city. A city all in white, like a bride, dazzling in the sun. A sky line serried with every kind of architectural delight, except churches, strangely, save for a single spire and the low baroque façade of the Cathedral of Columbus; the familiar dome of the Capitol. Morro Castle, grim and forbidding, is off our port bow as we ease into the inner harbor. Diving boys are in the water beside the ship as usual, only different in hue; not black, but brown, with a blond or two among them.

Havana is an open-faced town in true tropical style, with always the earmarks of Mother Spain. Narrow streets and ribbon sidewalks, the main streets among the narrow-

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est, the usual remnants of a once-fortified city, common to Europe of the period. Almost more Spanish than Spain itself. The old streets leading to the water are no longer beautiful, but the newer suburbs make up for this. On all sides are imposing public buildings, grilled balconies and window-bars, hundreds of cupolas. Flower-garden plazas, with surroundings that are picturesque as well as beautiful.

A city of ancient fortresses, retailing their stories of might and majesty, wealth and strife, down through the centuries. La Fuerza Castle, oldest fortress in America, constructed at a cost of four million dollars, from which De Soto set out to the conquest of Florida. Cabaña Fortress, that cost even more; with the "Twelve Apostles," old wrought-bronze cannon, still pointing out to sea as though French pirates were again about to sack the city and burn it to the ground as they did in 1555. Old Cojimar Tower, that repelled for a time the landing of the English army of General Pocock, 30,000 strong, in 1762. So valuable was the city, intrinsically and strategically, that Spain spent fifty million dollars in fortifying it through the centuries.

A city of memorials and palaces, beginning with El Templeto—the tiny Grecian temple built on the site where Columbus heard his first Mass on Cuban soil beneath a giant ceiba tree—and ending with the *Maine* Memorial—the actual cannon and chains of the ship incorporated in the composition—on the Malecón, directly opposite the point where the vessel was sunk at the mouth of the channel, five miles from shore.

Dramatic, spectacular, kaleidoscopic, with high-pitched noisy accompaniments. A vibrant city, strangely melo-

dious. Exotically beautiful, even in its more sordid aspects. Exciting and excitable and then suddenly subsiding into a somnolent midday siesta, when all the shopkeepers in town pull down the iron curtains and are engulfed in the Spanish patio.

We linger in the Columbus Cathedral—so named, because the supposed remains of The Admiral were placed here when Spain lost Santo Domingo, and were again removed to Seville in 1898 when Cuba was wrenched from her hands. We are shown the treasures of the Catholic Church, comparatively few in number, but rich and important, being among the finest and oldest in the Americas. The priest lays down his cigarette on the splendid table hewn from a thirty-foot log of mahogany, to show us the hammered silver vessel in which the feet of the lowly are washed on Holy Thursday. A gem-studded chasuble, a gift from the Pope; one of the most beautiful examples of silversmith work in the world; a reliquary, seven feet tall, delicately fashioned in Gothic design, supported by exquisite figures of the Four Evangelists. Tall chests filled with priceless pieces, holy vessels and candlesticks, as old as the New World itself; rickety closets with simple snap locks that are left unfastened while a polyglot crowd of several hundred sightseers are taken to other parts of the sacristy. An interesting wooden figure of the city's patron, St. Christopher, that used to be carried in the processions; now cut down to fill a dark corner in the cloisters. A quaint yard that had once been part of the cloister gardens, over the wall of which can still be seen a portion of the monastery now used as a seminary. In one corner stands a huge aviary filled with birds, which

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one of the old priests is attending tenderly and affectionately. But the whole atmosphere is listless, the old spirit is dead. Religion seems to have almost vanished from Havana. Only when the three-hundred-year-old bell in the tower rings do Old Spain and New Spain seem to vibrate and when it stops the din of Cuba Libre once again engulfs and claims the scene.

In contrast with the crumbling and neglected Columbus Cathedral is the Columbus Cemetery. All the former enthusiasms, glories and riches of the church seem to have been shifted to the ashes of the living, the city of the dead. At least, it reveals that religion is not altogether dead. For beauty, ostentation, mortal vanity and immortal glorification, we place Colón Cemetery above all others in the world. It is a vast marble and granite city of carved mausoleums. Hundreds of tombs are grilled or glassed chapels, richly furnished, the coffins of the deceased in full view on shelves. A glittering necropolis; gay with flowers, studded with gems, and ornamented with silver and shining brass. Funerals are restricted to certain hours, when it seems that scores of waiting dead come flocking in. One may judge the importance and the wealth of the deceased by the ostentation and form. The rich and famous are escorted through the streets, slowly, with lingering steps, accompanied by bands of music and a cortège, the number of horses and the grade of hearse being determined by the depth of the purse. The poor are fairly galloped through the town—if they can afford a hearse—as though the sooner disposed of, the better. Paupers are borne along in a pine box on the shoulders of professional undertakers, chatting and smoking like delivery boys, or

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by the father or husband—for no women accompany the remains to the cemetery. Paupers used to be thrown into a great pit in Potter's Field, but now they may rent shelves in the wall at so much per month.

The University is impressive and one of the oldest in the Americas. The last time we visited it, it had been closed almost continuously for five years, owing to the constant insurrection of its ten thousand students. We cannot recall the time when some note of unrest did not underlie the rippling surface of everyday Cuban life. We have seen soldiers stationed at every corner in squads of four, with bayoneted guns held at action angle. Or, again, during a political campaign, radios belching into every plaza and radio wagons blaring forth fiery speeches of denunciation throughout the suburbs. At that time, the President's Mansion was empty, vacant, as was the huge Capitolio. The building of this Capitolio had been based on war-price sugar; it was completed in a twenty-million-dollar bankruptcy. This huge failure helped to disrupt the nation and brought about another revolution, which resulted in the flight of President Machado. At least, Machado was responsible for one of the finest buildings of its kind in the world. The massive carved bronze doors are fashioned after those of the baptistery of Florence and depict the sacred and profane history of Cuba, but the three panels showing the achievements of Machado have been ripped out, leaving a gaping wound to tell the tale and mar the work. "Teddy" Roosevelt, charging up San Juan Hill at the head of his Rough Riders, still occupies a prominent panel. The building contains a reception hall that almost rivals that of Versailles; the legislative cham-

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bers are equipped with a ventilation apparatus that sprays the incoming air with perfume, and each member has his own microphone.

We drive repeatedly along the Malecón by the sea, which is scarcely surpassed by any urban driveway in the world, and pause at what appears to be an American Center, where there is a concentration of American statues and busts, including those of General Wood and Colonel Roosevelt I. We can scarcely realize that the entire waterfront was one of the deadliest fever holes in the world—until the Americans cleaned it up. Beyond, stretches the beautiful new Avenida Wilson, where every householder is compelled to make his front yard a flower garden. Many shades of bougainvillia, hibiscus and poinsettia climb and hang over walls, filling the street with color and perfume.

We must go out of Havana if we would get a true perspective of the social strata. The smaller towns go Spanish American in character. A continuous Main Street consisting of a row of one-story houses that straggle off into plaster sheds, of faded pink, sickly green and dirty brown, a spacious open door with a curtain, large windows usually barred like a prison. Poverty in all its ramifications, evidenced in the ubiquitous presence of swarms of sometimes naked, potbellied children, brown rather than black. The people live according to Spanish tradition, however, rather than that of the West Indian natives. Also, the familiar burro of the other islands is missing.

The city parkways extend for miles with occasional sumptuous estates dotting the open country, often owned by Americans, many showing the ugly marks of depression in their neglect. One handsome mansion in the

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suburbs was used as a stronghold of the *insurrectos*, who wrecked it and set it afire when they were worsted.

The island offers two thousand miles of good roads, more often than not shaded by double rows of blossoming laurel, royal poinciana and almond trees. There are sugar mills and broad cane fields, tobacco plantations under white netting to protect the tender leaves, shrines and old Spanish churches with their familiar façade bell-fries, and convents. Local fiestas, processions and pilgrimages recall the deep religious spirit of bygone days. Peasant thatched-roof huts, oxcarts loaded with mahogany or sugar cane; the landscape plumed with palms. A panorama of rivers and valleys and hundreds of miles of coast drives, with always an ancient city, for this New World, exuding its delightfully musty incense of Old Spain.

But Havana is something different, different each time we return to it, perhaps to play. We discover the Country Club, the near-by beaches, the Casino—one for winter and one for summer—the race courses, the fastest jai alai matches in the world. We may live the same conventional hotel life as in New York, London, Paris—and meet the same people. All this would scarcely be worth mentioning, save that it reveals the cosmopolitan character of a great city of six hundred thousand souls out in our Caribbean Sea.

We may spend part of an afternoon out at the Tropical Gardens maintained by a brewery, where the whole city seems to be forever picnicking, dancing and drinking beer, returning at about the cocktail hour, when a profound spiritual change seems to be at work and the narrow pavements grow cool in the shadows. New sights

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are forever cropping up. The fanfare of midday Havana breaks up into scores of musical strains. A subtle joyousness pervades the streets, as though in preparation for that eternal carnival of Nighttime in Havana.

This is the hour to walk abroad; walk, not ride. Stroll down the older narrower streets, under Hispano-Moresque balconies and grilles. Linger in that finest plaza in the New World, surrounded by the Cathedral, La Fuerza and the former Governor's Palace, bounded on all sides by eloquent walls of historical and architectural beauty.

We did this on one occasion when we made the fatal error of wearing a cap instead of the regulation stiff straw hat, and were spotted as a tourist. We were accosted at every corner. Did we want to see a "show," or go to the "quarter," or buy obscene postcards, or a box of cigars "better than Coronas"? We tried one of these cigars and it almost spoiled an evening for us. Failing to sell us a box of cigars, the pest changed his tactics and poured forth a hard-luck tale about having been out of work for three years and having a wife and three children starving at home. We contributed a dime.

Coming out of one of the old streets, we were suddenly in the great plaza, with the spotlighted Capitolio as a brilliant backdrop to the lively scene. Tables of a half dozen cafés spilled out into the street; in front of several of them open-air orchestras were playing, some composed of women; the tables were filled, the sidewalks thronged, the curbs lined with Cuban gobs, Havana gigolos, peremptory policemen tapping their night sticks musically on the sidewalks to keep the crowd moving;



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busy vendors and fakers, selling peanuts, tips on the races, lottery tickets, Havana cigars, Cuban rum and anything else that a tourist might fall for.

We stroll on down the Prado—that beautiful promenade shaded with laurel, the walk of marble mosaics, artistic benches imbedded in the masonry sidewalls. The crowd is of another sort: townspeople, just walking and talking, many of them lovers. Boys pass up and down carrying nickel cans and thermos bottles, musically calling, “Café! Café!” At least ten bands of itinerant amateur musicians, apparently singing for pleasure and not for pay; groups of young fellows, pausing under a tree and singing sentimental Spanish songs in close harmony. We pause before an elaborate-looking Republican Social Club, where the members are dancing the rumba furiously in a brightly lighted upper ballroom; a dozen couples cooling off on the grilled balcony. At the junction of the Prado with the Malecón, we find the military band in the bandstand and sit in one of the chairs and smoke a real Corona, and listen to the stirring music, recalling our visit that afternoon to the Corona Cigar Factory, and the lecturer who sat on a high platform above the several hundred cigar workers and read aloud the daily news or exciting novels or told them stories all day long, dramatically taking the parts of all the characters encountered. Several noisy children near at hand remind us of the Orphan Asylum we had visited, where despondent mothers bring their unwanted children to a small trap door in the side of the building, ring a bell and the children are shot upstairs in a basket and no questions ever asked. The band ceases and the crowd disperses.

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Now what? There's nothing humdrum about Havana night life. Out to Sans-Souci or the Casino? Jai alai or hell-raising? Slumming or Sloppy Joe's?

We preferred a different diversion, which will always make Havana stand out for us as a place apart. A drive the full length of the Malecón; a gentle drive about eleven o'clock, under the stars, and along the sea, from Morro Castle to the Hotel Nacional—the sea washing against the wall, the light on Morro blinking at the spectacle, all the harsh modern lines of the city softened and, like the overtones, mellowed into the Spanish picture—reliving the events, the hordes and hosts stalking through it all: curious Indians hiding in groves of palms and watching the landing of Columbus and his men, De Soto setting forth with his company of brave men, reckless buccaneers sailing in again and again and being repelled by the guns of La Fuerza, the English armada under Lord Albemarle that took and held the city for a time, the repeated rebellions and executions, the sinking of the *Maine* and the coming of the Americans, Cuba Libre—the end of Spain in the New World!



## Chapter Ten

### THE ISLAND OF PONCE DE LEÓN— PUERTO RICO

*Forty Little Americanos—"Fountain of Youth"—A Ten-Day Panorama—Spanish Patriarchate—Spanish Blood—American Foreign Policy and Its Blunders—Semana Santa—A Mob in Action*

WE recall vividly the first visit we made to our favorite island of Puerto Rico, just an average American tourist and traveler, more or less ignorant of the true nature and potentialities of our West Indian possession. The day following our arrival in San Juan, we set out on a leisurely ten-day tour of discovery: motoring southward across the high mountain range, from the capital, on the Atlantic, to Ponce, on the Caribbean, and thence, following the shore line back by way of Mayagüez, covering the eastern end of the island. En route, by chance rather than design, we rediscovered the Fountain of Youth, vainly sought in Florida by Ponce de León.

We set out from our sumptuous Condado Hotel, after a New York night-club night at the gay Escambron Beach Club, with a vague and disturbing feeling that Puerto Rico had "gone American" with jazz leaps and tango

bounds. Within the next twenty minutes we began to have our doubts. An hour later we were convinced that the U. S. A. was 1,500 miles away and might just as well have been a million.

There were exceptions, perhaps, where we found Uncle Sam peering through the grille of the Spanish patio, finding other vistas besides that of the tropical jungle. For example, shortly after we passed the great American dam harnessing the waters of a primeval mountain torrent and filling a deep valley rescued from the one-time jungle, we came upon a tiny district school half hanging over the edge of the arroyo. We paused for a moment at the open doorway and listened to the forty-odd primary pupils reciting in unison: "Washing-tone ees our nacional capitol. There thee presidente—Frankleen Hroseevelt—ees living ad dee W'ite 'Ouse. We are ole leetle American—ceeteesens—for—"

The pretty little schoolma'am—a dainty Spanish beauty with rouged cheeks and lips and fingernails reddened—espied us and hesitated. The forty small adopted Americans—half of them white of Spanish descent, about fifteen chocolat-au-lait and the remainder pure negroes, with the exception of one little fellow with coarse straight black hair, probably a survivor of the Indian breed—all stopped their recitation. We addressed the teacher in our rheumatic Spanish and she replied in forthright Middle Western English.

"I was educated in a convent in Springfield, Illinois," she explained. Then she went on to tell us how all the primary and grammar grade children study and recite first in English and then in Spanish.

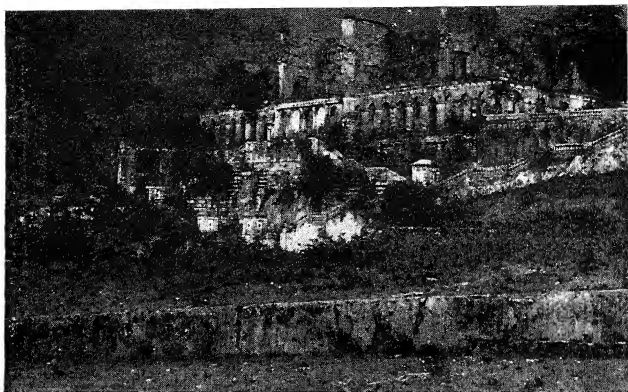
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From what we could gather, they corresponded to the progeny of the "hillbillies" at home, but we are obliged to confess that they were just a shade more civilized than most of those we had seen in the depths of our own Blue Mountains. Perhaps half of them were barefooted, but their faces and hands were clean. "Hygiene is the first thing I try to teach them." The teacher pointed to a wall basin, with soap and towel, at the back of the room.

We could faintly hear the noon whistle blowing far down the valley where the dam construction work was still going on. Immediately several little hands shot up. Teacher nodded and off their owners scurried. "Some of them bring their rice and beans with them; others must go home for it. And, please," she pleaded, as we were leaving, "do not go back home and tell our American cousins—like so many of your people do—that we Puerto Ricans are all black people! Most of us are white and direct descendants of the Spanish."

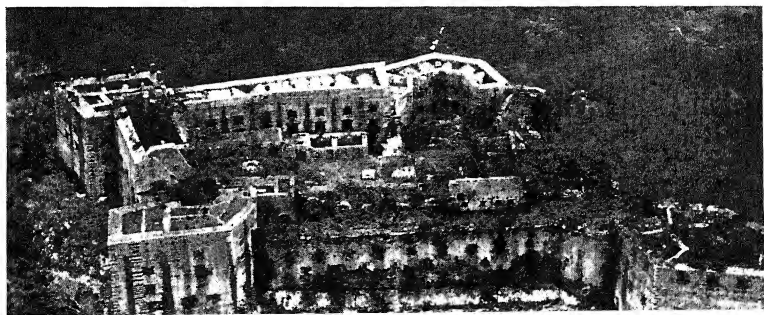
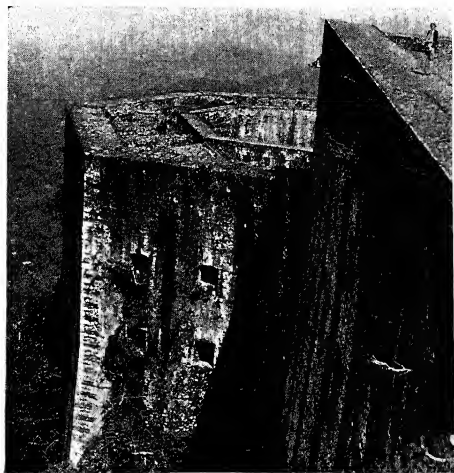
We pushed on, ever deeper, though always higher and higher by way of a hundred turns of the serpentine road, until we reached the summit, some four thousand feet above sea level. From that peak we had vistas of both the Atlantic and the Caribbean, with faint glimpses of our Virgin Islands. Thence through fifty miles of flowering sugar cane, with tobacco and coffee plantations sometimes on hillsides at an angle of forty-five degrees, and we wondered how the farmers and their lumbering oxen manage to overcome the attraction of gravity.

Then followed an hour's ride through half-tamed jungle country, shaded with wild mango and breadfruit trees



Sans Souci, once regal palace of his black majesty Henri Christophe, whose now ruined walls and marble terraces witness his former greatness.

La Ferrière, Christophe's mighty fortress, is one of the seven wonders of the new world. Seen from the air the citadel is even more impressive.





Although the Cathedral at Port-au-Prince does not look very imposing surrounded by the slum-like houses of the town of Port-au-Prince, its cool interior charms the senses with a kaleidoscope of colors reflected by its brilliant rosace window.



As if their loaded panniers were not enough of a burden, the patient donkeys of Haiti also tote their owners jauntily about all day long.

and occasional West Indian cottonwoods; past wild coffee, wild oranges, wild grapefruit and wild bananas that brushed the sides of the car; skirting thrilling arroyos with twenty-mile views, the tropical scene always plumed with royal palms. We zigzagged down the southern slopes of mountains on roads as good as are to be found in similar locations anywhere in the world, and sped for miles and miles through the gorgeous, flaming shade of poincianas, acacias and almonds. Occasionally we paused to refresh ourselves with milk from a freshly opened coconut, or the juice of a wild grapefruit or orange which we were allowed to pick for ourselves; and dropped in at basket or hat weavers' palm-shaded shacks to see them work. At length, in midafternoon, we drew into Coamo Springs.

The hotel and its surroundings reminded us of an old print we once saw of a charming, rambling ante-bellum Southern inn. On two sides it was all verandas, with one end screened off for the colored servants, whose intimate daily life was delightfully exposed to view, with always a half dozen pickaninnies or old mammies leaning lethargically over the railing and looking down into the courtyard. The whole tempo of the place was tropical, deep Southern. The hotel was built perhaps a century ago, for rest and relaxation, and it was impossible to do or be anything else while there. Nothing was on time, for time was nonexistent. Why do today what may be done so much more conveniently tomorrow? *Aoriya! Mañana!*

From the earliest days of Spanish conquest Coamo Springs has been a favorite resort of the island. "Fountain



of Youth" was probably the earliest bit of American advertising flamboyancy. A figure of speech, indicating what the Europeans have—with an equal flair for publicity naïveté—termed a "cure" or a "bath."

We followed the colored major-domo down a long wooden ramp succeeded by a stairway that finally brought us to the springhouse at the bottom of a deep vale. There seemed to have been many structures, the remains of the earliest ones now only ruined walls, built of that same rubble of which old El Morro in San Juan was largely constructed. There were also remains of conduits that carried the boiling waters out of the sides of the neighboring rocks. Surrounding it all were the outlines of what must have been a beautiful tropical garden, now crumbling and encrusted with lichen, exotic creepers hanging in festoons from the ancient trees with a triumphal touch of grimness, in the recession of high Spanish culture into the grasping fingers of the jungle that one so often sees in every part of New Spain.

We were led to a long gallery with vaulted ceilings and thick walls, which might have been a prison with its cells on either side. Would we bathe in a nuptial bath, with two pits side by side in the concrete? Or would we prefer to bathe all alone in a smallish coffin-shaped bath? The shape favored the body couchant, so all we needed to become a museum piece was to be covered by some upheaval, forgotten for a few hundred years and then dug up again.

Those long stairs, so heavy going down, seemed airy fairy when we climbed out of our Fountain of Youth nearly an hour later. The bath had made a West Indian

youth of us. We were filled with rocking-chair pep and had learned the precious meaning of mañana! We had thrown off that North American incubus and maxim, which dings our ears and rowels our souls from morn to night like an alarm clock, "Time is money! Time is money!" The time clock had stopped.

We went completely native in that respect. Coamo Springs is that sort of place. We had caught the tempo of the country, and a few days later pushed on slowly, rolling the delightful scenes under our sightseeing palate; stopping overnight when and where we saw fit.

Ponce, one-time busy seaport and metropolis, with rotting docks and boarded-up warehouses. It is just a sleepy Spanish town, with a touch of African whimsicality in some of its institutions. Its Fire Department is in a house with wide-open front painted yellow and red, stuck onto the apse of a great church and highly ornamented with fire-fighting implements, the firemen sitting about or parading the town in their red shirts and voluminous helmets. A huge unforgettable market with all the luscious savor of Spain gone West Indian—finger bananas, custard apples, papayas, green sweet oranges, home-grown chewing tobacco in thick braids at one cent an inch, native baskets and hats, mangoes, yams, strange pod vegetables shelled and sold by the pound, live poultry and pigs on the hoof, and "crackling" by the bag—for pork and its products are turkey and pheasant rolled into one; fish in all its Caribbean oddities. A smiling good-natured crowd, socially inclined, half of them sucking oranges or chewing sugar cane. We soon collected a buzzing swarm of small boys; they tried to sell us liver and lights and other

internals of freshly slaughtered animals, laid out temptingly on scraps of newspaper, and later became our parcel carriers. An outside market of a hundred small burro-drawn carts with as many more panniered donkeys. Finally, just as we had seen it all over Spain, a *rastro*, or junk market—where they sold every kind of secondhand article, from toilet seats to staves.

Mayagüez, its finest buildings the Asilo de Pobres, or poorhouse, and the Matadero Publico, or slaughterhouse. This center of the Puerto Rican embroidery industry is in the hands of New Yorkers, while Syrians are said to be in control of the shop commerce. We stopped for a bite at an enterprising soda parlor-bar-fancy groceries-restaurant. The neighboring Reform School—at the end of a long avenue beside the sea and flanked by coconut groves—has the most beautiful surroundings and view of any school we can recall. In fact, all Puerto Rican institutions are reared amid beauty—climbing flowers, garden parks, gorgeous vistas of a turquoise, island-studded sea. There is also a good-sized college on the outskirts, founded and financed by a Puerto Rican doctor who has devoted his life to well-deserving youth.

At the Melia Hotel we made the acquaintance of "Mike," its famous host. We ate breakfast in his patio beneath the hotel, into which seeped all the street cries, calls and vibrant life of the busy little town. It was like a corner of his native Majorca: with majolica urns, a fountain playing and caged birds singing, a brindle cat purring and meowing, the sun shining through the vines of the trellises on the vivid tablecloths, while various colored guests leaned from the balconies overhead and

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chatted in Spanish. All the time Mike was talking volubly, chiefly about Majorca, and punctuating his lingo with a frequent "okay."

Infinite variety along the well-paved roads—hills like bubbles, arcades of almonds and alleys of bamboo, corrugated-iron houses and hurricane hide-outs, rows of men with machetes working in the cane fields, old Spanish bridges with concrete parapets, orange-blossom honey farms, charcoal burners at work, tobacco sheds on hill-sides, roadbeds carpeted with blossoms, huge United States radio towers and army barracks, a monument to two brave Spanish officers killed in the Spanish-American War. Every few miles we passed a caminero's brick house, a relic of Spain's fine military road-building system. There was the inevitable little Spanish church around which all physical, social and spiritual life once rotated. Every kilometer was marked by a "milestone." The coffinmaker—"La Ultima Cuna" (The Last Cradle)—was working out in the sunlight on an ornate casket; the itinerant barber did a brisk business beneath the shade of a mango tree. We saw a beautiful bay, half obscured by Texaco gas tanks; hundreds of pelicans sardine fishing in a Pompeian cove suddenly took flight when a school of sharks appeared, a huge cigarette sign spoiled the view. Four men played dominoes under a breadfruit tree, using watermelon seeds for chips. Guanica, where American troops first landed under General Miles. A sugar republic—with its own clubs, police, post office, movie theater, stores, hospital and railroad. A lilac hearse, with a crucifix as a radiator cap and decorated with effigies of angels, contained a pine box with a few wild flowers on it, twelve men walking

behind four abreast, seemingly in a jovial mood. Strange silhouettes in the luminous darkness.

A town every half hour and always a Spanish town—especially at night: the palm-shaded plaza with the church at one end the core of the community, the church sometimes dimly lit, the bells ringing out that Spain is not dead so long as the Catholic Church lives. The new people's temple—the movie house—a blaze of light, in competition. The long main street, the open-faced shops. As it grows later, the shops close one by one, the hum of life becomes a murmur, the lights grow farther and farther apart and finally give place to shadows, shades of the tropics, of Africa, of Old Spain. But never of the United States.

"Marvelous!" we said, when we returned to San Juan. "We love Puerto Rico and we know it from end to end!" Shortly after this we visited one of the first and oldest Spanish families in San Juan. We shall call them the "Romeros." Then and there we found that we scarcely knew a thing—at least none of the big, problematical things—about our Puerto Rico. Through the Romeros we were first introduced into the very roots of the complicated Spanish setup, traditions and customs—the crux of the whole American problem in Puerto Rico.

Señor Romero was a wealthy banker and all-around big man of the town. In all things he was quite the individualistic Spaniard who would never be changed by Americans, although he fancied that the Americans would never suspect that he was anything but a Yankee. He and his family were in no sense smug, but he was endowed by nature with that amazing self-confidence common to his

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race. He lived with his large family in "Romero Court," as was ostentatiously announced on the grilled entrance gate. This was a perfect development of the patio idea, for within the great enclosure lived not only the paternal Romero family, but their family's families. A somewhat riffraff settlement surrounded the Court on three sides. Romero actually seemed to like this contrast. It followed old feudal lines. He was lord of his surroundings. He was conscious of it every time he drove his big car through the uncouth Main Street with its shanties, movie house, shops and school, and entered the little lane he had cut through their midst. Every time a new Romero child was born, he built another house as a dowry for his or her future marriage. There had been nine children, with eight living, whom he facetiously introduced by number instead of by name, as, "This is Number Three." The parent house was like a mother hen with all her little chicks scratching around the back yard. The big house contained all the earmarks of Spain with a few cheap bad-taste American pottery ornaments scattered about to give it the Yankee keynote. The Romeros were as nice people as one would find anywhere. They drove us all over the island, but their home hospitality ended at the patio door. After we had been treated to the vilest of cocktails—mixed in all good faith by Señor Romero's un-American mind and hand in an effort to make a Broadway gesture—the family filed in and sat down at the dinner table, for which no place had been set for us. For all that had gone before it, we were rank outsiders when it came right down to the inner life and soul and customs, which were neither American nor Puerto Rican in origin, but Spanish.

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"Spanish Blood." We are different races, different peoples. Purity of racial blood is all that is left guarding the time-honored strain, tradition and legend of the Spaniard, that are as exclusive, prohibitive and forbidding as those of Jew and Japanese. Until a few generations ago, no living national kept the faith more strictly. This was true not only of Puerto Rico, but of the Spanish inhabitants of the other Indies and the American mainlands. Curiously, this racial endurance and hardihood persists in whatever corpuscles are communicated through a few drops of white Spanish blood to an African, through miscegenation. They, too, carry on vicariously the Spanish tradition. Going further still, the unblooded blacks and Indians who for generations have been associated with or dominated by the Spanish exhibit all the habits of the patio convention.

One steadfast manifestation of Spanish blood is its antipathy to and repulsion of the domination of the upstart American. We find this in active evidence everywhere, from the tip of Magellan to the Rio Grande, a virus that is certainly at work in Puerto Rico. It is not necessarily aristocratic, but rather intensely individualistic, as is evidenced even in the beggar. Only pride and a past are left, yet none uphold them more zealously than Spain's American strain, thinly spread yet none the less deeply rooted in a one-time alien soil; peoples whom they have made theirs by attrition and transfusion and yet have never assimilated.

Romero belonged to the pure-blooded, old school—"Castilian caste, ruling class, first families." A sort of *Mayflower* complex. A code of never intermarrying with

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any but racial peers has prevailed since the landing of Columbus. "The Americanized schools," he complained, "have done so much to break down caste. Before, we had schools for whites and schools for blacks. The Americans carry the mixture into politics, into everything."

The very core of Puerto Rico is Spanish, and will probably endure for centuries, flourishing even more defiantly in the last stages of decay. Thirty-eight years of American occupation have done little or nothing toward real nationalization. In the first place, it is too vitally strong for us to uproot; in the second place, our policy of diplomacy and our methods of colonization are futilely crude and hopelessly meddlesome.

America has had numerous fine and capable colonial officers, governors and governors-general—and a handful of diplomats—who for a time built excellent governments and governing groups and did jobs that will stand shoulder to shoulder with those of any other nation. Sooner or later, however, our "foreign policy" begins to operate and the best work is destroyed and our effective contacts with the "natives" annihilated. It is not so much that we have a bad foreign policy, but that we literally have none that can long withstand the pressure of petty politics at home: the four-year overturn, constituent preferences, the spoils system and Washington's crass ignorance of intrinsic questions and native problems of the colonies. Any or all of these home affairs and continental politics have almost nothing to do with our outlying possessions and their government, welfare and local policy. Revenues and aid are naturally part of the home government's concern, but administration is a thing apart. Placing



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their management and welfare in the hands of incompetent politicians, theoretical educators and inexperienced men, perhaps prominent in other walks of life but totally unfitted to handle a foreign people and their problems—as is a bloc-Congress in passing bills to regulate them—is just too bad. The result is inevitably a series of scandals, outrages, investigations and expensive commissions furnishing a Congressional holiday for members and their wives. Handling the whole thing like they used to do the third-class post offices, where the incumbent was thrown out every four years. America should have a Foreign Office, with a foreign service personnel composed of men of long experience who have mastered the native and psychological imports and are square-shooting administrators. Men who understand the “handling” as well as the governing of colonial “natives”; of long residence and contact, of sympathy and understanding, speaking the language fluently.

Constant troubles in the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands—not to mention scandals in Haiti and Santo Domingo—are notorious examples of misrule, chiefly through traditional ignorance and psychological misunderstanding: a government official sent as a model to Haiti, who grafted off the Syrians to the detriment of the Haitians; a governing officer in Cuba who punitively had the pigtails of the bullfighters cut off, thereby violating a sacred tradition and offending the people more than if he had ordered the culprits' heads cut off; pardoning a self-confessed and convicted thief of government property in the Virgin Islands, and so crippling the right arm of Justice for all time to come; send-

ing as governors to Puerto Rico a coddling Roosevelt and a Southern "nigger"-hating Gore.

Foreign affairs statesmanship has become the most difficult in the whole calendar of diplomatic arts and sciences, in this world of international brotherhood, organized masses of incompetents, universal rebellion and uprisings. Even England seems to be failing.

Most Americans on foreign shores—officials or otherwise—become Mr. Fixits, missionaries by social profession. The Yankee traders follow the flag, lured by concessions. On first acquaintance we become warmly personal, and then paternal. The British are different. They are coldly impersonal; they go out to rule and nothing swerves them. In their code there is always socially an abyss between natives and rulers, yet they will die for each other. Time and time again, in our colonies, we have seen the American contact grow into something like a canker sore, a form of social indigestion, as it were, from too much sweetness. A flare-up follows the coddling. We become as cruel as we were kind. Perhaps the marines are called in to give the natives a beating. When we have the situation almost in hand some Midwestern, or East Side New York, Congressman steps in in the cause of humanity; official hands are tied; both sides lose, and go about thereafter with an injured air and growing animosity.

Events leading up to the assassination of Colonel Riggs, back in February, 1936, were not precisely these, but they followed the formula. Riggs was chief of the Insular Police. If anything, he was altogether too gentle in handling the leaders in the growing rebellion against

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American rule. Members chosen by lot shot him in cold blood as he was returning home from Mass on Sunday morning. The assassins were apprehended and in turn shot down in cold blood in the police station. No blunder could have been more inopportune, thus providing a new excuse and aftermath of vengeance on the part of the Nationalists, always bearing in mind that we are dealing with Spanish Americans and their notorious complex for insurrection. The Puerto Ricans, however, are a much milder and softer people than their fiery Cuban cousins.

American meddling politics again have sorely aggravated and complicated the situation and hampered local legislation and administration. Briefly, there has been no little friction between the policy of Washington—through the somewhat despotic overrule of the Department of the Interior—and that of the local legislature composed of Puerto Ricans and of the American governor who has been trying to work in harmony with them. The Subdepartment of Insular Affairs has in more than one instance stepped in and given succor and encouragement to leaders and agitators of the anti-American elements. Chaos becomes inevitable when a house is divided against itself. Unopposed, if not almost encouraged, the Independence, or Nationalist, party was allowed to spread like wildfire throughout the island, carrying on with increasing violence in which several of their fighting members finally met their death. In revenge they assassinated Colonel Riggs. In the nature of an ultimatum, Washington framed the Tydings Bill—with the approval of President Roosevelt and his Cabinet—demanding a plebiscite

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of self-determination. Washington thus washed its hands of the pickle they had permitted the Puerto Ricans to get into and demanded that they settle their own fate and definitely take one of two courses: absolute American domination as Washington saw fit to administer it, or independence in which they could take their precious island—and starve, as they surely would in the present setup of this bankrupt, overproduced world of greedy nationals jealously guarding their high tariff walls. An abandoned orphan stepchild of nations; a waif and stray of the world; a lonely White Elephant of the Caribbean left amid tropical plentifulness to starve!

The effect of the Tydings Bill on the Puerto Rican people was paradoxical. A wave of dismay and resentment swept over the island. In the two-way ruling of the bill, the pro-American party—then in power through coalition—was given a slap in the face. For thirty-eight years these Americanistas had braved insult, ignominy and sacrifice while fighting for and building up American prestige in order to Americanize the island with a view to future statehood and citizenship—like that promised Hawaii, for example. For the first time this group, feeling betrayed, also turned in natural mistrust against American domination.

One more piece of fat in the fire—the NRA and the forty-odd millions of relief funds precipitated a local political row when the government placed the latter largely in the hands of the minority group, engendering a sort of Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde spectacle. Far more serious, however, was the effect on the structure of society of both those measures, honestly intended as relief and

benefits to an overcrowded and largely unemployed population.

Again, we find a delicate case of national psychology that ought to be treated with farsighted intelligence. The economic standards of the island were ignored, and social missionary tactics largely in evidence. The objective was not only to feed, but to elevate them.

"Peon" is still a general term applied not only to the peasant, but to workmen as a class. It is one of class distinction implied in the old Spanish code rather than of social stigma. "To elevate the peon," a Puerto Rican country doctor told us, "you must first radically shift the whole social scale, the very earth, and the world in which he lives. Be careful!"

Our friend Romero shook his head gravely. "They do not understand us, these American politicians. The Puerto Rican native people cannot be pushed ahead too rapidly or they will stumble and fall. They have really wanted for little. They were content. If modern civilization really must come to them, it should come slowly, or its advantages are lost and become disadvantages. They all have a roof over their heads, clothes to their backs, food enough to eat, a little education, entertainment at least of a sort they enjoy. They are not a lazy people, but really industrious to a certain point, not ambitious. They were content when they made sixty cents a day, surely a dollar. Suddenly the scene is changed and they get two dollars a day, perhaps more. They are not a thrifty people. They are tropicals. They cannot digest the change that is thrust upon them. They spend all the money and are poorer than ever. They move into modern quarters

too quickly. Into airtight houses from their open-air huts. Tuberculosis results. They actually work less and drink more in their idleness and quarrel continually. They treat their wives and families not so well as formerly. And they gamble more—for they are inveterate gamblers. With it all comes arrogance and a false sense of power; above all, a growing feeling of discontent. Already America has done an irreparable social damage that has spread through the whole Indies, and I do not see how it can ever be remedied.”

On a Bull Line steamer we met a pretty little social worker. She informed us: “Our job was to tell them they should eat off a table, not a board, and off a plate, not a gourd. They looked at us blankly, for they had no table, no plates, and could not afford them.”

We are so kind, and when they take full advantage of our kindness we are so cruel. We do not know how to treat simple children, especially foreign mixed or black children. It is a difficult job for which we are totally unfitted. At the other end of the scale we have made a curse of creating an overabundant white-collar class, through high-pressure high-school and higher education which cannot be assimilated, or accommodated to either economic or industrial conditions. In consequence, the whole island is out of joint.

Finally, a Puerto Rican official of an American steamship line summed it up: “Americanization! As though in thirty-eight years you could wipe out the Spanish strain that has been deepening its roots for more than four hundred years! Call it the Spanish disease, if you like. It has never been done yet and could be done least of all by

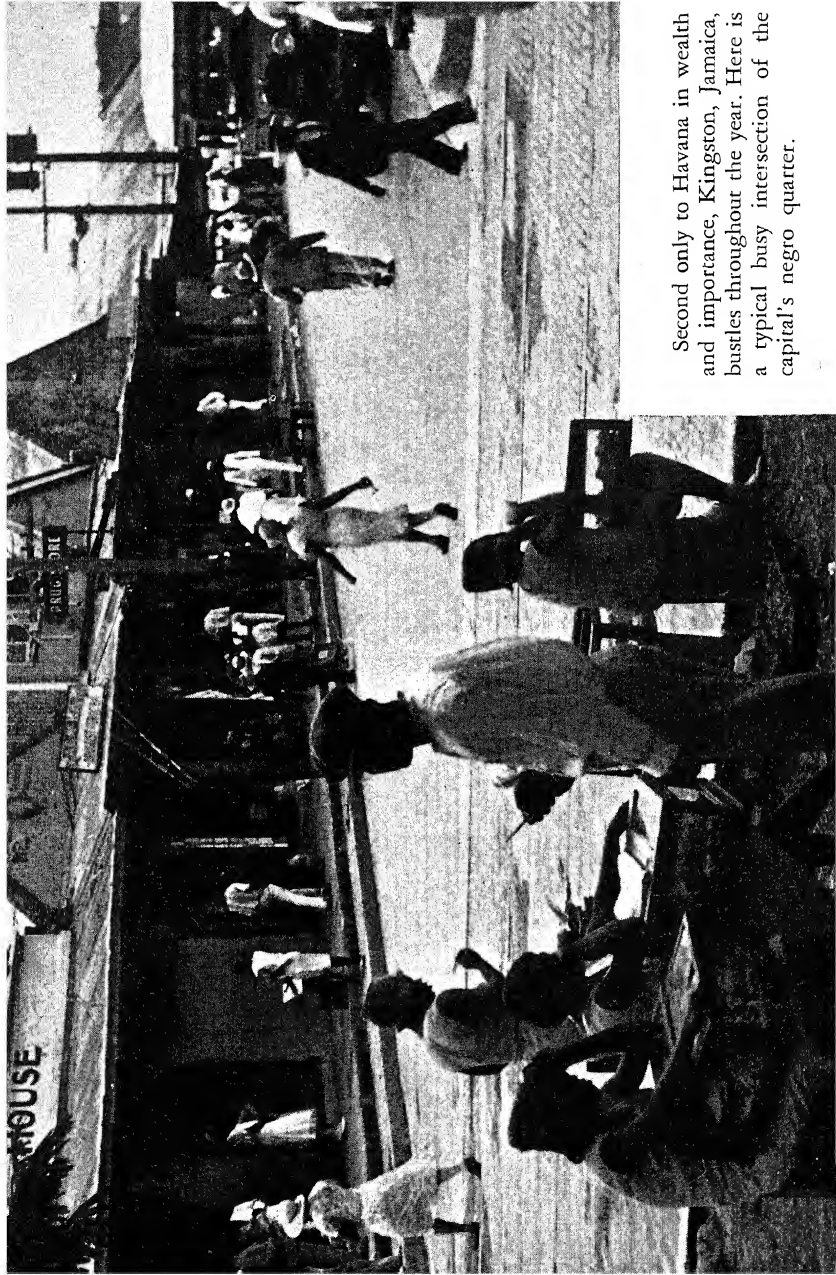
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Americans. After thirty-eight years there are only a handful of Americans and nearly two millions of Puerto Ricans facing each other, looking at each other vaguely, ununderstandingly."

All of which detracts in no sense from the comfort, progress and enjoyment of the visitor, but rather makes the capital and the island absorbingly inviting and interesting, once the complexity of its life, manners and customs is somewhat understood.

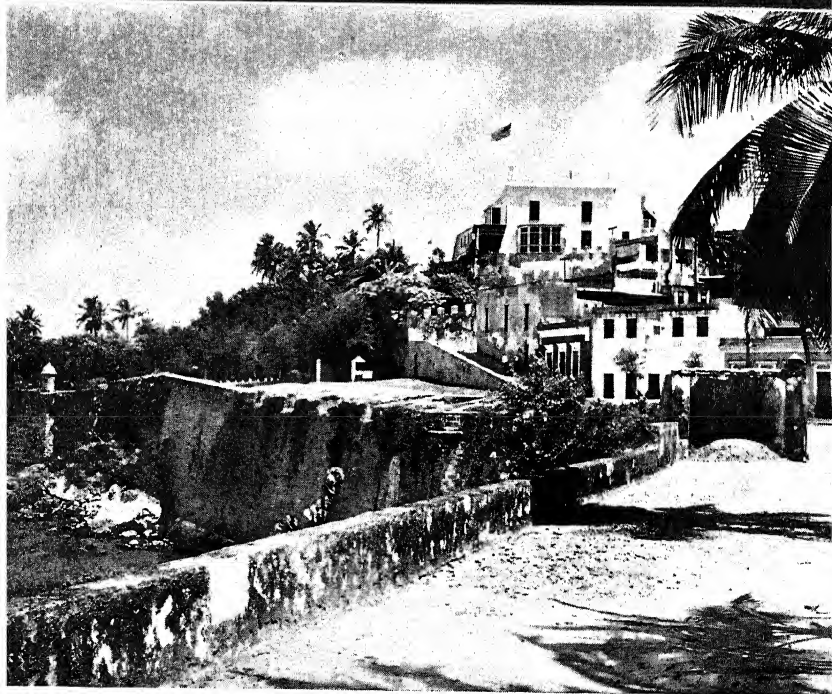
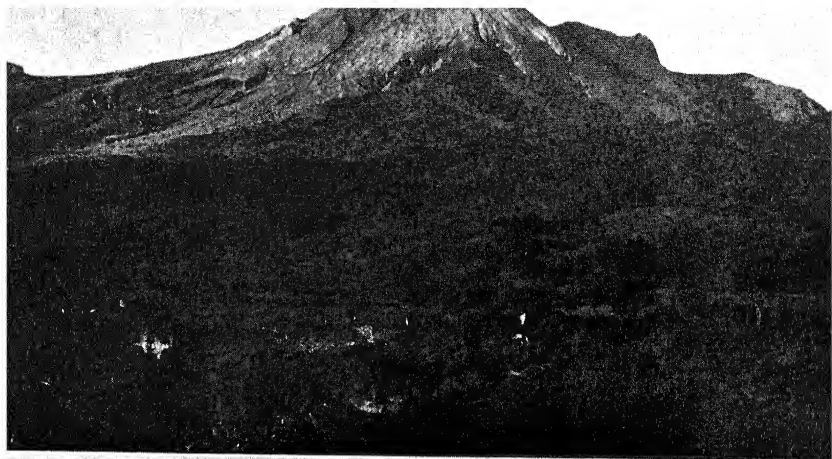
For us, one of the crowning romantic experiences of our lives was a week spent as a house guest of the American governor within the walls of the outstanding palace to be found in any of our possessions, La Fortaleza. The two towers of this fortified palace were completed sometime before 1540. And we were housed in the suite adjoining one of the towers, around which we had to feel our way in the dim light set in the mahogany rafters high above, always pausing at the door that led down worn stone steps to the circular chapel beneath. We had a small balustraded balcony overhanging the wall-inclosed garden, where, we were told, the Lindberghs and the Franklin D. Roosevelts—when they occupied our suite—were also to be found sitting during any leisure moment permitted them. We can recall no choicer spot in the world. Each hour of day or night there had its mood that stirred one's fancy deeply.

Just past the jutting corner lay the sea and the entrance harbor. The rocky islet and its ruin where the great chain used to be stretched across the harbor to keep out the avaricious buccaneers and envious enemies in their constant attacks on the rich Spanish city of San Juan. The



Second only to Havana in wealth and importance, Kingston, Jamaica, bustles throughout the year. Here is a typical busy intersection of the capital's negro quarter.





*Above.* Mt. Pelée, the Vesuvius of the Caribbean, still rumbles its warnings.

*Below.* One of the historical spots of San Juan, Puerto Rico:—Casa Blanca, the original house of Ponce de Leon's son.

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Leper Island with its two patches of palms and former pesthouse. The string of buoys beginning to blink their intermittent lights of red, green and white, the moment the sunset gun is fired off El Morro, that sticks her huge jaw into the sea at the headland. The richly fronded palm and its bunches of coconuts, gently waving and sighing all night long just within reach of our Moorish-tiled and fancy-fretted balcony. The town, rising in coral-like ranges above the far walls of the garden, with the baroque façade of the Cathedral, holding the remains of Ponce de León, standing head and shoulders above all else, three stories in okra and white, a red-tiled dome and a flock of cupolas, the cross silhouetted at the peak against a very blue sky. The roof-garden patio of the house across the street, half hidden in a bower of bougainvillia. Casa Blanca—built by and for the son of Ponce de León, in replica of one occupied by his father, the first governor of Puerto Rico—surrounded by ancient palms and luxuriant flowering foliage, overlooking the scene in its four-square dignity and majesty in the silvering twilight. A beautiful hooded sentry box standing out against the fantastic mare-tailed sky.

We look out over the broad terrace along the parapet below, flanked and banked with the rich-hued flower gardens planted by flower-loving Governor Winship and daily watered and nurtured under his personal supervision. The walled garden below our balcony sways in the evening breeze with exotic tropical greenery. The yellow alamander and mauve and lavender bougainvillia furnish a ravishing sight among the shapely balustrades in the golden dying sun when viewed through the slats of the ancient

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green blinds of our west window: a window with six-foot walls out of which a Spanish "24" once poked its wicked nose. Our great room—like all the others in the palace—is still floored with two-foot tiles of black and white marble. We are surrounded by curious spooky closets with natural mahogany doors, always with little peep windows in them. All openings have indentations for the heavy bars that once barricaded them against enemies from within and without that beset both great and small in those desperate days; here and there are mysterious rings in the walls. A secret door leads out past a gaunt high-ceilinged chamber with great barred doors in the bulging walls to the ceremonial halls beyond.

It was our good fortune to be a resident of the Fortaleza during Holy Week and over Easter. We had once spent Holy Week in Seville, and in both fancy and reality we found ourselves back in Old Spain—with a reasonably few discordant notes of modern Americanism.

On Holy Thursday the whole town shops for Easter. There is in the air a suppression, and yet a certain contained gaiety over the coming Great Event in Catholic Christendom, that has seeped down through the Catholic islands, surviving in the depths of their consciousness, conscience, imagination and superstition,—despite the pagan times, fostered by the black association,—love of color and church glamor. Again—as I write these lines—on Holy Saturday, the noon whistles blow, the old City Hall sweetens the hour with its chimes. Then suddenly begins a delightful din of all the church bells of old San Juan, mingled with the bugles over in El Morro. Old

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Spanish bells, than which no overtone is more mellow, more reminiscent of Spain in all her medieval glory—so mutely and sadly decadent except momentarily, giving voice to all that was, through this medium of sound alone. In such rare moments as these one catches the triumphant voice of it all above the almost menacing undertone that seems hushed as though in awe. Only for a moment, and then the blare of Things as They Are drowns it out—the wailing note of Africa, the brazen radio jazz of the conquering futility of the United States.

Easter morning we were awakened by the gardeners singing softly among their flowers on the fortified terrace below and the voice of Governor Winship directing them and luxuriating in his creation. Then the Easter bells begin to ring, reviving all that traditional ecstasy that was once so much a part of every line and fiber which we see now sinking into decay. Although a typical American holiday celebration had been planned for us, we first stole away to the Cathedral and arrived in time to see the procession at High Mass just filing in, one of the very old priests using his cotton umbrella as a staff. It was a scene that somehow we hope will never die, for with it will perish some of the most vital motivation and filament of Spanish America, whether it be under self- or any other rule. The edifice was comfortably filled. We hurried down the side aisle so that we could get close to the sanctuary. There we found a very mixed group, equally curious, and yet actively engaged in the spiritual as well as the lip service. It was all sincere, but done as lackadaisically as they do everything else. In the transept the pews were all filled. One old darky was half reclining on

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his elbows overlooking the spectacular doings within the sanctuary; a venerable, poverty-stricken appearing old fellow with a cane. We were surrounded by blacks, colored and Spanish and many children, some kneeling, some on tiptoe, for we were directly beside the bishop's throne. When he reads the Epistle, the whole colorful cavalcade within—all black or colored excepting the priests—surrounds him. He refills the swinging censers with incense, sending up a sweet cloud of smoke. The crucifer and eight boys in red cassocks and white lace cottas, the priests and deacons, all kneel and kiss his pontifical ring; one removes his miter, another holds his jewel-studded staff, others remove and change his robes to the sacred garments of the Mass, the sweet-voiced black choir raising high-pitched notes; the celebrant begins chanting the Gospel. We found the congregation lingering—as was the age-old custom—on the steps. (Where not so long before Colonel Riggs had bade good-bye to his friends, to be assassinated a few minutes later on the plaza in front of the customhouse.) Policemen, women in deep black with mantillas, colored dandies, everybody dressed in Easter finery and vibrant with the spirit of "Christ is Risen!" And a minute later we were hurrying back to the Fortaleza, past a wide-open saloon pouring forth the whining notes of a "torch" song.

We have poked around San Juan and vicinity for weeks—leisurely, for haste is impossible if one expects enjoyment or penetration in Puerto Rico, where the entire tempo is gauged to slow motion only—and made delightful "discoveries" on every trip. There are nearly two

thousand miles of perfect motor roads, so that one need have no worry on that score.

An American has set up an ideal loafing resort that he calls "Treasure Island," for example, some sixty miles out of the capital through choice and typical country that alone will give the visitor a topographical panorama of the island. In a nest of tropical hills the proprietor has built a group of little cabins for the accommodation of overnight or week-end guests, with a huge thatched shed of logs as a dining, dancing and lounging veranda overlooking the view. Or, one may sip cold drinks in the shade of colored umbrellas and palmarosas, fanned with a winelike breeze that seems to prevail in those hills. Deep blue mountains peer over the green promontories that are covered with pineapple and coffee plantations and pastures with hundreds of steers or broad-horned oxen grazing placidly. Poinsettias drape every doorway, banana trees laden with fruit are scattered over the vast dooryard with always a thick shady breadfruit tree in the vicinity under which to sprawl out and read or dream.

Also, within easy motoring distance lies one of the world's unique treats—the Caribbean National Forest. The CCC have done a splendid engineering job in building a perfect macadamized road through the heart of the primeval jungle and to the very summit of one of the island's highest mountain ranges. It is the largest and finest timber stand that remains of the noble forests that once covered the land. The foliage is kept perennially lush and luxuriant by a rainfall that averages one hundred sixty inches a year. The government is encouraging the population to use the National Forest as a site

for bungalows, camps and picnic grounds. Two large swimming pools have been dammed at high points amid forest shade, cottages have been set up near by, and enterprising purveyors of refreshments and more substantial food have built palm-thatched pavilions. We have seen more than a thousand picnickers up there on a Sunday, with many busloads of school children camping out overnight. The government maintains several camps to be used by officials and military officers on a holiday. We spent a Sunday morning up there with Governor Winship and his inseparable companion, Black Jack, an amphibious black Labrador dog.

We had seen cockfights galore—relishing them no more as gory spectacles than we do bullfights—in many parts of Spanish America, but we never saw a really genteel one until we went to Puerto Rico. Cockfighting—with any number of other typical Spanish American diversions that were holiday meat and drink for the populace—was declared illegal when the United States took possession in 1898. Like most prohibitions of staple evils, it had been carried on regularly, bootleg fashion. Governor Winship, with a keener insight into the value of native diversions as a safety valve, signed a bill legalizing cockfighting. The result to date is that San Juan seems to be the cockfighting capital of the world, with two great pits, one of them—owned and operated by the president of the local legislature—the most luxurious in the world.

A cockfight is no place for the squeamish. We went one Sunday morning—Sunday is the big day for all sports in Spanish American countries. Our companion was a typical Yankee of long residence. He had married a very

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pretty, pure-Spanish Puerto Rican girl and they had several grown children. We know of half a dozen identical cases. He became enmeshed in the Spanish complex, though scarcely conscious of it. In each case, the mother had so jealously guarded and guided her children in the Spanish tradition that neither corpuscle of blood nor hair of the head of them is anything else. They are Spaniards. The American father could not comprehend why he and his children had so little in common, providing he bothered his head about it at all. In one instance we were introduced to a high-school boy of one of these unions, and his father had to apologize because the boy "had so little English," for the simple reason that they spoke nothing but Spanish at home!

We went to the less elegant of the two pits, the din of which could be heard several blocks away. There were about one hundred fifty spectators, seemingly gone half mad over the contest and its outcome. They leaned and screamed from numbered seats of a tiny wooden amphitheater that completely surrounded the ring and graduated upward into five tiers. Within the ring on the dirt floor the seconds squatted or danced around the birds in a battle lasting forty minutes—which one combatant seldom survived—that was conducted precisely like a prize fight. In fact, the cocks themselves were like boxers, waiting for openings, feinting, sidestepping and always trying to land a fatal peck or spur in a vital spot and end the fight. Outside the ring were the cages holding additional contestants scheduled to fight throughout the day, each labeled with name, pedigree and weight. At the rear were training quarters and scores of other game-



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cocks, some of them being groomed by the barber; their entire legs and other strategical portions were clipped of feathers so that wounds could be easily located and treated. Betting was general.

We took our places and were self-surprised to be drawn into the emotional hullabaloo. At first there was only one policeman sitting down front and yelling and betting with the crowd; eventually there were three. A great dial with a light and bell called the rounds. Two women were in the audience; the others for the most part seemed to be men drawn from all walks of life: an old colored man with glasses, a Spanish gentleman in immaculate whites, a United States marine, a policeman. A golden bird and a black one; goldie does the attacking, sometimes knocking blackie flat; blackie, though weak on his pins, manages to pick an eye out of goldie and the battle turns; both are groggy as the bell sounds and the trainers pick up their birds and spray them with water held in their mouths, and wipe off the blood, sharpening beaks and spurs. Another round; now both are blind and stagger around seeking each other, picking the air; at the next bell the fight is declared a draw. All the battles were like that; some more so. We wearied of it after an hour, but the devotees remained and yelled themselves hoarse until nightfall.

The Penitentiary was worth a visit. From a distance it appeared to be an enormous building, but on closer acquaintance it proved to be four stories high with a hollow center as though it had been gutted by fire, the inside area of several acres just an open patio of playgrounds interspersed with flowers. We drove up and

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knocked on the open-barred doors; the guard admitted us without much ado. The vestibule was filled with prisoners running around loose. We found the prisoner our guide knew well—a handsome and altogether nice murderer and lifer. He had been there ten years and seemed perfectly at home. In the lobby were many visitors chatting pleasantly with their imprisoned friends and relatives.

One visit to the Marine Gardens scarcely sufficed. We had to drive the whole length of the truly lovely avenue, in the city limits, that leads along the peninsula, with the sea on one side and the lagoon on the other; flanked by an impressive array of public buildings: the four-million-dollar Legislative Palace with a boondoggle \$75,-000 heating plant, standing out oddly in white marble of classic design; the Spanish Club with its architecture, tiles, goings-on and sentiments imported from Spain; the School of Tropical Diseases; the great cigar factory; the Botanical Garden; the War Memorial—each adding a gratifying touch not to be found elsewhere in the Indies. We cross one of the three bridges and soon after turn off into one of the few bad roads so near the capital, and find ourselves in a bona fide strip of West Indies, with blacks living in thatched huts and a five-mile lane between coconut plantations. At the very end, a crude toll bridge leads to an island. There we could spend the whole day in a small powerboat equipped with peepholes in the glass bottom, through which one peers into the depths of lapis-colored bay, into the gorgeous garden of the sea—swaying marine foliage, weird castles and formations of coral rock, peopled with sea monsters, grotesque shellfish and

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finny creatures, both large and small, strikingly marked with vivid hues, carrying on their daily deep-sea life.

San Juan is deserving of a chapter, nay, a volume, whereas space permits the bare mention of but a few of its high lights. La Miranda, for example, the densely inhabited slum that stretches out on stilts over a swampy inlet, yet no one seems to be able to do much about it, as it is the property, handed down since the Beginning, of absentee Spanish landlords, and the residents pay a dollar a month rental and seem to live in their one-room soap boxes in contentment bordering on joy. A Spanish city, the older sections with all the earmarks of a walled town, side streets fifteen feet wide, main streets perhaps twenty with overhanging balconies, with here and there smallish plazas with palm-shaded benches; all clogged with cars parked on one side and a continuous stream of honking vehicles and motorbuses, their courses directed by good-looking, dark-skinned traffic cops at every cross corner. An occasional band of street musicians play and sing ballads in a doorway where they are finally rewarded to get rid of them; "Luckee Girl Dress Shopp"; "crackling" vendors with glass cases on wheels containing small roasted pigs from which a slice of rind is cut; a great fancy grocery shop run by an American of thirty years' residence. A quaint little cemetery that seems to have slid off a cliff of slums almost into the sea and a little farther alongshore, jutting out from the formidable and ancient Fort Cristobal, is the Haunted Sentry Box from which the sentry mysteriously disappeared leaving a legend behind him.

We find sizable Y.M.C.A. and Cruz Roja Americana

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buildings; hokeypokey carts always in (Spanish) yellow and red; Felicia Style Shop, Maruxa Dress Shop; an entire block of American shoe shops, filled with impossible "samples" and Broadway styles that natives wear in proud pain, Klein's Department Store, new and ultra-modernly throwing the architectural beauty of the whole plaza out of gear; Modas Carmen Gonzalez, Bar España, Liberty Magazine Shop, Manolin's Beauty Parlor, Joyeria—encircled by a titanic gilded engagement ring. Small boys sell gaudy ready-made neckties. There are pretty Spanish-type women with oiled curly locks, Indian types, mulattoes, black mammies with baskets on their heads, women with broad-bottomed baskets filled with live chickens, others with eggs, or trays of fresh-baked buns and sugar cakes; little wagons offering peeled oranges to suck, grapefruit and custard apples. From Abraham Lincoln Escuela comes voluble Spanish in childish unison. There is in all this a sprinkling of beggars and lottery ticket sellers; and there are countless little rumholes and other hole-in-the-wall shops. All talk, gesticulate, think and feel in Spanish, as though Spain were still in the saddle and the *Maine* had never been sunk.

And so, at the end of a day of exploring, we were happy to return to La Fortaleza, for what was always an enchanting night within those palace walls. It was a relief, particularly, if we had been riding out with the governor in Number 1 car with the flag flying on the front, for we were never too sure what might happen, although we had a police chauffeur with a guard beside him and were closely followed by another car containing an armed guard of five.

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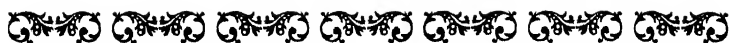
Nearly always there was a semiofficial dinner to face; eighteen or twenty guests perhaps, with semirigid etiquette and "dress." Sometimes government people came via airplane; or maybe a private yacht full of friends; always one or two who had served with General Blanton Winship somewhere or other on his numerous commands, missions or commissions all over the world. We had cocktails in the grand ceremonial rooms, surrounded by grim paintings of all the former American governors of the island and of presidents who had had a hand in it, and Moorish and Spanish frescoes and ghosts of scores of others who had drunk and feasted in these same halls under vastly different auspices.

Then came the glamorous hour, when we all climbed the broad mahogany stairway, passing along the famous corridor of ancient colored glass of Moorish design, thence out on the top of one of the old towers, that the governor called his "penthouse," where coffee and liqueurs, cigarettes and cigars were served to us as we sat on the parapet or in deep steamer chairs, the Big Dipper turned upside down overhead, the Southern Cross twinkling in the south. Cane fires glowing on the farther shore, the lights of Buyamón and Miramar blinking across the bay, the porch of Casa Blanca on the hill alight where the American commandant is giving a party, the sea washing gently against the base of the sentinel towers that stand out in bold relief, the ocean thundering in the distance against the prow of El Morro that bars it from the channel. Or, we gaze down into the ancient patio of the palace, with its deep wells and dungeon entrance sheltered by a canopy of bougainvillia, its scent sweetening the night

air, while ships glide ghostily out of the harbor, threading their way between the lines of bobbing lights.

Then came one night that was more exciting than all the others. It was on the occasion of another visit. Governor Winship had that day gone to Washington and our party was small. It was late and a bright moon was still shining, and the peacefulness of the scene was eloquent. We had just remarked that our friends at home could not even imagine such peace and quiet, when suddenly, away off at the top of the hill where the poor of the town live in large numbers, a curious hum of voices could be heard. It grew louder and louder and we realized that it was approaching the palace. It was as though a dam had burst and an avalanche of waters gaining in force was rushing toward us. Long before the mob reached the palace we knew that it was bent on mischief. Riggs had been killed, officials had been threatened, the American flag had been torn down and the Independence banner raised in its stead. The Palace Guard assembled; the commandant telephoned down to ask what was the trouble. Several thousand students and malcontents remained ominously in front of the palace for some time before they could be persuaded to leave. A single hothead might have started something that would have prevented these words from being written.

Whatever happens, we almost hope that the United States will retain this lovely island of Puerto Rico and will in time learn to be fair to it, for it is a jewel of great price that we should keep in all its own setting.



## Chapter Eleven

### OUR BARREN VIRGINS—THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

*Changing Ownership—American Acts and Omissions—  
Bluebeard and Blackbeard, Pirates—St. Thomas and Its  
Capital—Scenic Beauty—"Hotel 1829"—Street Kaleido-  
scope—Depreciation of Sugar Industry—Other Islands  
and Scenes*

"WHAT a different world this would be," we mused as we sat trying to hold our balance aboard the waspish, war-like little U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Marion*, plunging through a heavy sea as we rounded the corner of Puerto Rico and began to nose our way through the Virgin Islands, "if civilized nations were but friendly and Christian in practice and international politics and not savages eternally bent on dominating, plundering and exploiting weaker nations or warring or preparing for war—of commerce or of the sword—among one another!" We had been thinking of the whole avaricious crew playing battle-dore and shuttlecock with the West Indies and manslaughter among themselves for over four hundred and fifty years. "Then the moment these islands—once so important and profitable—become white elephants and begin

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to 'eat their heads off,' their owners become uneasy and want to sell them! The simple, trusting natives, who had proudly treasured their distinguished parent-nationality, find out overnight that they were only bastards after all. For a time, at least, it does something to them. It destroys a fundamental sense of allegiance, for one thing."

The poor—and that is the correct word—old Virgins have been kicked around that way. The flags of at least six European nations have waved over one or another of them since Columbus discovered and named them, in 1493, on his way to Santo Domingo; Spain, Great Britain, Holland, France, Sweden and Denmark—not to mention a brief commercial rental to the German house of Brandenburg. In most cases—owing to their barrenness, with particular reference to St. Thomas—they proved a commercial failure. It is true, they flourished for a time as the crossroads and trade center of the Indies under the domination of the Danes who made Charlotte Amalie, the capital of St. Thomas, a thriving metropolis of trade, both legal and illicit—in the latter case with the pirates. World conditions changed and with them the good fortune of the islands. The emancipation of the slaves was one mortal blow; the abandonment as a coaling station of importance when fuel oil came in was another stroke. When they became a staggering liability, more than fifty years ago, Denmark began to shop around for an unwary buyer. Negotiations were at the time carried on with the United States, up to the point of signing the bill of sale and preparations made for Danish evacuation, but Congress sidetracked the deal. The price was but a fraction



of what the United States finally paid for the islands in 1918, twenty-five million dollars.

"Uncle Sam's Poorhouse," ex-President Hoover once called them. "Heavenly—a second Bermuda!" rhapsodized President Roosevelt's Cabinet member, Ickes, some years later.

To a certain degree, they were both right. There is a reason for the purchase, however, that is too generally lost sight of in most of the hot political and popular discussions concerning the advisability of their acquisition. This angle may prove that Uncle Sam was not so big a boob as he was generally credited with being. Here we turn back to our opening remarks about the perpetual military strategy of nations: "in times of peace, prepare for war!" Likewise, we come uncomfortably close to the reason why England and France, in particular, will continue indefinitely to cling to their one-time precious nuggets of White Gold that have in many cases turned into almost worthless White Elephants. Strategic naval and submarine bases, in case of ever-imminent war! It is said that we bought the islands in haste in 1918, when it was rumored that Germany was negotiating for them as an overseas submarine base. This version alone should answer adverse criticism. As to their ever becoming an asset of commercial profit, that is a black horse of another color.

So, in a few hours we sail past Culebra Island—one of the hundred Virgins, save that it came into our possession through cession by Spain, rather than through the later purchase from the Danes. A barren brown hinterland, in disparaging contrast with Puerto Rico's lush green; a black lighthouse looking like a mosque, with

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a single palm tree near it; a long low white building, a red-roofed settlement and a dock on the shore, with a few small sailing boats, and a sprinkling of red buoys adding a dash of lively color to the malachite and sapphire sea, the white house and the brown hills. And that is all there seems to be to Culebra save hundreds of head of grazing cattle, excepting when the navy uses it as a base and a few traders from the other islands show up. If reports are to be believed, however, this uninhabited island, almost more barren than the others, is probably destined to become the most important of them all—as our future naval and air base in the West Indies. A protection and emergency port for the Panama Canal.

It is a beautiful sail, especially in late afternoon, when both shadows and colors stand out vividly and the distant islands take on a shroud of mystery. There is Vieques, with hundreds of birds winging their flight across our bow to join the thousands already standing silhouetted on its castlelike ramparts. In the twilight we can well believe that a French frigate fired on Sail Rock Island all night long, thinking it a British man-of-war. At length we come in sight of St. Thomas, its brown deforested hills reminding us of China and its vast treeless areas—the stupidest blunder of the otherwise wise and superior Chinese in thus denuding the land and furnishing one of the prime causes of her downfall and subjugation, through lack of deep-rooted vegetation and watersheds, leading to droughts, famine and disease. Here, especially in St. Thomas, a similar situation is growing. It leads us to wonder—with all the government's Brain Trust, agricultural and forestry experts that made a desert

California to blossom like the rose—why they are not turned loose on this barren Virgin to try to solve her problem of sterility. Today she is dried up from end to end, with the need of water so acute in the dry season that practically every drop has to be imported save a brackish residue that annually threatens to cause an epidemic. The whole island raises a few vegetables and fruits, scarcely enough to feed a handful of the population. The rest are imported mainly from Tortola, a British island—even the neighboring St. Croix and St. John being too busily engaged in harebrained government schemes costing millions of dollars. The fact remains—and is supported by history—that the countryside reveals the ruins of many windmills that once were part of vast sugar plantations that partially covered these same areas.

On our first visit to St. Thomas we spent several days at the Bluebeard Castle Hotel, that government tourist project, that cost Heaven alone knows how many hundred thousand dollars. The less said about the government's whole idea of spendthriftery, and all its extravagant ramifications, the better. Suffice it to remark that the site, the structure itself and the accommodations for less than one hundred guests are beyond reproach, although the food, at this writing, was very poor, and the black taxi boys and baggage shifters and the general tariff were exorbitant.

We disagree heartily with Secretary Ickes, in his reported comparison of St. Thomas with Bermuda. They are not and never will bear any resemblance to each other—beyond the fact that both are islands. St. Thomas—rather say, Charlotte Amalie, its seaport capital (which

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is now officially called St. Thomas)—has a natural beauty and a native charm that need never go begging elsewhere. In the whole of the Indies we shall come upon no other spot or town like it. Its topography, its architecture, its struggling gardens and, finally, its people are quite different from any of the others. The latter three we may attribute, of course, to its Danish culture and upbringing.

Bluebeard Castle looks suspiciously like all the other windmill tower ruins found throughout the islands. But we shall be the last to dispute any legend, so we accepted it as being the stronghold of Bluebeard, the pirate chieftain. It has been left intact—except for an inscription: “Visited by President Franklin D. Roosevelt—July 7, 1934”—a substantial stone wing having been extended on either side, with additional stone “cottages,” containing usually a pair of rooms and bath each, spreading over the summit and slopes of the high hill overlooking town and harbor. There is a separate dining room and terrace, the latter shaded with mango and other tropical trees. On the afternoon of our arrival we attended a garden party held there in honor of the coming of a new Someone-or-other and were surprised to see how numerous the government and military officials and their wives were, and how much they could eat and drink.

It was not until evening, however, that we became imbued with the true beauties that belong to Charlotte Amalie. We sat until twilight on the porch of our own little “guest house” and then strolled over to take dinner on the terrace. It was actually cool and the ladies had to slip on their wraps. Our table was beside the parapet looking down on the white town. The silhouettes of the

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surrounding hills grew darker and darker, the lights of the town came out one by one as though put on by a lamplighter, until they became a glimmering reflected mass in the waters of the harbor, which we could hear faintly lapping the shore and the docks. There was something exotic and stirringly foreign in the feel of it all. Having finished dinner and come to coffee and liqueurs, the flood-lights above us were suddenly turned off. The effect was enchanting. It was like switching on the light of a luminous green moon that hung above us, until now unnoticed in the deep blue sky, flooding a scene that one rarely finds outside of unforgettable stage settings, and of this we became the characters as though in a play. There was a White Russian in our party and as we smoked and sipped chartreuse, we talked in low tones of other and more glamorous days in Russia, and of other things as unreal. He told us facts more eerie than fairy tales and sang snatches of folk songs. The moon rose higher and higher, illuminating more pieces of scenery, bringing ever new and unbelievable light effects on water and town—and this went on till midnight. We shall always remember that night on the terrace of the Bluebeard Castle Hotel.

One day, during our frequent browsing about the town, we happened to drop in at the shop of Mr. Taylor. It was no particular kind of shop. Mr. Taylor, like so many others, was playing store, seriously, among a lot of old books (mostly religious and hymn books), cruets, crockery, postcards and junk, which the natives saved up for and bought. He was a soft-spoken dreamer of exquisite manners and very English speech; a handsome mulatto gentleman of the old school living altogether in the past,

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chiefly on the remarkable exploits of his accomplished English father. It was he who told us of "Hotel 1829." Mr. Taylor ran it, in fact. The whole thing intrigued us and we promised him to stop there on our next visit—which we did.

We warn the squeamish to keep away from Hotel 1829, for it is shabby and not oversanitary, and has no "water laid on," as the English proudly say of their plumbing. But the place reeks of atmosphere, of Old World charm that is redolently un-American—reminding us of an old mansion we once stopped at in Provence and of a dilapidated wing of a castle we lodged in in Thuringia, and of an ancient patio where we spent several days and nights in La Mancha. We credit our residence in Hotel 1829 chiefly—cloistered quite apart for a brief season from the grinding machinery of Americanization—with being able to ensnare the bewitching native charm (with all its delectable undertones and overtones) that indubitably dwells in the Virgins.

Despite elaborate assurance and reassurance through a voluminous exchange of cables and letters with Mr. Taylor, no one seemed to be expecting us at Hotel 1829, and only by chance did we find that our large corner room had been vacated on the morning of our arrival. The "hotel" was once a splendid mansion, far up the side of one of the hills over which the town picturesquely sprawls, commanding a gorgeous view of the city, the harbor, and all their life. It might well be designated "Stumble Inn," for at the street entrance we had to climb a series of worn steps, pass through a vestibule with the legend, "Dane-mark 184," dimly visible on the lintel, into a court, or

patio, up another stairway, across an open veranda, through the family dining room and finally into our room. Our Sunday dinner—in the form of several ducks tied by one leg in the court below—is the first to quack a friendly welcome. The whole place is casually out-at-elbow, which somehow seems to go with the ménage and is soon forgotten. Our bed is an oversized mahogany four-poster draped with a darned mosquito bar, our sheets, once beautifully embroidered, also have suffered reverses but are immaculately clean. An ancient iron strongbox reposes for no reason at all in one corner and helps excite our imagination and curiosity.

A dragonish old lady rules the house, the servants and Mr. Taylor with iron hand and tongue. She seems to sit all day long on a cushioned throne in the adjoining family dining-and-sitting room, peeling fruit, sipping coffee, giving orders. She has many Creole and dark-hued callers, who stand or lean with one elbow on the table and talk by the hour. We can often hear her regally rebuffing the almost tearful opposition of Mr. Taylor who rails in vain in his mild manner about this or that. As he explained more than once to us, she had been a dear friend of his mother's who just dropped in to make a call one day, stopped to visit them for a few days and had remained after his dear mother passed away some years ago. She had brought with her her swearing parrot, her two cats, which had bred a legion of progeny that were all over the place, and two funny little dogs of doubtful parentage but pronounced personality. These canines had the run of the house and siestaed on the rugs in guests' bedrooms. They were friendly beasts, however, and well behaved.

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They were gifted with great imagination, frequently putting their little heads between the balusters of the dining veranda and looking down and fancying they were seeing a strange sight over which they were so astonished that they gave a fat little "Woof! Woof!" Their other diversions were playing with the dragon's many tortoise-shell cats, most of whom had crumpled ears and blear eyes that did not match and, like everything and everyone else, were friendly. In the evening at dinner, while waiting for bones from the guests' plates, the doggies rushed up and down the veranda trying to catch the otherwise friendly lizards that lay in wait for rare flies.

Our meals were served by a Spanish boy, with no English, sometimes assisted by a hired, tired colored woman, who also made the beds. At all times this woman wore her bonnet and a flowered frock, evidently to give the impression that she had just dropped in for a call and was magnanimously "helping out."

To reach the all-purpose veranda, we must pass through a huge parlor, which is a repository of mixed Victorian treasures of old Dr. Taylor's one-time affluence and the sanctuary of our Mr. Taylor's daily inspiration, communion and pride—marble-topped table, horsehair furniture, portrait and "views" albums, a second-Bible consisting of a huge "West Indian Directory" that must have cost loyal subjects about four pounds sterling and, finally, a bookcase filled with sepulchral tomes to give solace to any shipwrecked soul, including *The Science of Obstetrics*, *Science and Practice of Homeopathy*, *Young's Night Thoughts*. Among them are three ragged copies of works written by Dr. Taylor himself, and we found them choice



reading. In the rear is the relic of a once-lovely patio, the overlooking gallery reached by a miniature sweeping staircase on either side leading up from a fountain. The little terrace opposite is pergolaed and the whole shaded with tropical verdure sadly in need of grooming.

On a Sunday evening, sitting on our veranda at Hotel 1829, we feel "at home," very close to the heart and soul of Charlotte Amalie, of which we had only felt a distant vibration at the Bluebeard. We are just eighty-six steps from the level of Main Street straight below us. A gracefully curved yellow brick balustrade with a crescent terrace overlooks a public park through which pass sixty-nine steps with many landings. To the left is a garden with high white walls pierced by a Romanesque doorway, bougainvillia billowing over the wall. At the end of the street to the right is another stairway, always with darkies climbing, resting, lingering, love-making or gossiping on its steps. A dozen pickaninnies play below our balcony, a couple of stray marines stop to watch them, an occasional lone black boy passes, strumming mandolin or ukelele. As the shadows deepen, every post and parapet in the little park gathers its complement of leaning couples, men and boys. The night blossoms with voices, the true character of the town emerges with a tone and lilt seldom heard beyond the Caribbean or the Indies, a million native miles from that of Stepmother America. Bells—that always give a personal note and key to foreign localities: first of the stately striking clock in the ancient Danish Christians Fort, the illuminated tower of which we can make out through the palms in the waterside park; then the more careless clangor of the distant Catholic church;

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finally, the gayer tones of the near-by Protestant Moravian church, followed by the singing of hymns, sweetly as only darkies can sing them. Lines and colors linger softly in the twilight. The swaying palm and pepper trees, the red gambrel roofs of the square yellow buildings with their green shutters and heavy round-arched street doors, the scores of steps running up every side street—Government Hill, Synagogue Hill, Denmark Hill, French Hill. Flame trees in the park “going out” as though the dusk were extinguishing their crimson light. Bluebeard Castle is now a sparkling string of lighted beads around the shoulders of the hill; other lights festoon the mounds of the town in wavy garlands. Our Bull Line steamer *Catherine*, like a raft of lights, is just drawing to the landing with the mail from St. Croix. Blue clouds turn into slumbering black as the evening advances and the yellow lights in the houses are extinguished one by one and Charlotte Amalie goes softly to sleep, leaving only the tropical night and a Caribbean sky filled with strange constellations.

Next morning, as we look up from our breakfast tray through the large glassless window of our bedroom down upon the workaday world, the scene has changed; the colors more vivid, the spirit livelier. The one-legged boot-black is polishing the brass on his stand in front of the Grand Hotel. The United States post office on the corner, with the traffic sign “Keep to the Left” in front of it, has a file of blacks stretching out into the street ready to draw their dole checks from Uncle Sam. The scene has gone West Indian, with streams of passing negroes, the men wearing blue denim trousers, the younger women

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in floppy hats and bright pink or yellow dresses, an occasional older one with the ubiquitous Socony can, filled with precious water, or an enormous mound of "white washing" on her head; all very solemn, some talking to themselves. "Colonials" in all-white, wearing pith helmets. The bugle sounds in the Marine Barracks that was formerly the Danish Officers' Quarters, directly beneath the two-hundred-foot wireless posts. A black clerk opens the green door shutters of the post office and lazily raises the Stars and Stripes as though it were a ton of bricks. Donkeys drift by with pannier boxes laden with vegetables, milk and fruit. No hurry. One of them actually makes his way up our sixty-nine steps! Government trucks loaded with negro relief workers. The pudding lady goes by calling her wares which she totes in two large dripping-pans balanced on her head. Mammies wearing basket hats, usually with bright bandannas beneath them or a cloth pad on top, ready to swing a burden onto their heads. Scores of Charlotte Amalie belles, in white sleeveless dresses with black arms and faces in sharp contrast, displaying rows of gleaming white teeth. The harbor waters streaked in unbelievable greens, blues, purples and silver.

Finally, on a Saturday night, we take a glimpse along the main thoroughfare, Prinsen Gade—which the Americans want to rename Main Street, as they want to change all the quaint Danish street appellations to raw U.S.A. names. Charlotte Amalie's Great Black Way buzzes and hums as the whole population turns out. Every shop is crowded and everybody is spending, with certainly no signs of the island's notorious poverty. Prices are universally high and they buy somewhat fantastically—some

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gewgaw or gadget on which they have had their eye for a long time; a pair of women's fancy shoes probably a size too small, a man's felt hat pink in hue with a blue band, canvas shoes in three colors. We found the market end of the town somewhat neglected. The well-built modern market seemed incongruous with a few old women sitting around like owls with lanterns or candles beside their rather pitiful little heaps of fruit and vegetables. The electricity may have been out of order, or it was just another Virgin Island paradox.

In the open space behind the market we made a discovery, however. A religious open-air meeting was in session under the light of smoking torches. There was a wide circle with noise instruments, brass band, "praise" singing and testimonies. Probably twenty-five within the circle, singing lustily. A score of others in the shadows; too timid or too sophisticated to join. We recalled this halfhearted meeting in contrast with another of similar character—which we later came across in St. Lucia, a British West Indian island.

Altogether, it was a great social carnival; African, with a growing tinge of Harlem. Shoes were the great lure, probably because the once-poor ones have not worn them for many years. The older types with baskets on their heads rapidly thinning out and giving place to the Harlemized breed. Dandies in tight-fitting clothes on every street corner, hats on the side of their heads, courting gals in short socks, fancy shoes and un-island hats, like they have seen in the movies or on tourists; pretending to talk confidentially (in loud tones) among themselves: "Ah'll meetcher in duh mawnin' wid duh car, honey!" For any

number of them own old Fords—often painted pink or blue—although half the island is on the dole.

A promenade around the town is the only way to see it. The earmarks of the Danes are still to be seen everywhere. Down a side street to the rotting wharves and great empty warehouses, once bulging with profitable goods, that were being loaded on and taken from the fleets of merchantmen that crowded the perfect harbor. Today two tiny foreign-owned steamers make port once a month, with an occasional cruise ship during the winter. The "trade" consists of the handful of tourists who can be accommodated in the three smallish hotels. We are trying to revive at too-high cost the St. Croix rum trade in competition with all the Indies flooding the market with the same beverage manufactured at low cost.

Less than a dozen grimy, small sailing boats were rocking beside the crumbling dock. Traders for the most part from the British Virgins, bringing vegetables and fruit and livestock—a few cows, bulls and calves and black pigs, with some goats and kids in a covered pen. The dock was crowded with negroes jabbering their native quock-quock English, which we shall hear, but not always understand, as we proceed down through the Lesser Antilles.

We found a little oasis in one of the spacious warehouses, where an enterprising American had established a "cannery" of native fruits pickled in rum, which he was running on a shoestring capital and complaining bitterly of lack of government coöperation. In one instance, he had ordered a thousand basket containers for his little glass jars from the impoverished St. John islanders, but owing to a local quarrel with the commissioner there, his

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order had been officially "scrapped." It was just another commercial dream saturated with tropical sunshine in bowers of sweet-smelling bougainvillia—we discovered several of them—that would eventually be caught in a nightmare of clanking machinery of officialdom. We made our way back to Prinsen Gade by way of an evil-appearing lane flanked by warehouses. "The Beehive," a rum-hole for marketeers, bore a sign: "White Folks and Black Folks United"; as though to prove it, a drunken white beachcomber was holding forth chummily with half a dozen tipsy blacks. Down by the wharves and in piles of junk here and there on the islands, we saw many huge iron kettles—often among tangled machinery—which were once used in boiling down cane syrup, telling the sad tale of the fall of White Gold.

There is a single grove of mahogany trees left, in one of the five cemeteries just outside the town, near Brewer's Beach, a rather desolate strip of sand that provides the only local bathing. There is a substantial Moravian settlement house dating from missionary days, also near the beach. A road near there turns into the Chacha village. The Chachas are emigrants from the French neighboring island of St. Barts, which lives up to its sobriquet of white elephant by driving most of its inhabitants abroad to seek a livelihood. They migrate to St. Thomas at will like island birds; the men are chiefly engaged in fishing and the women in making and coloring the rush baskets sold in town. They are a sober industrious folk, white or only slightly mixed, and live quite by themselves in a village that resembles a hill town of Italy in the way it covers a picturesque hill surmounted by a church.

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Government House stands on a hill. Here the governor lives and has his offices. A sign on the gate of a neighboring house reads: "Bad Dog—Positively No Water Given Away." Near by are the offices of the other officials. The court, wherein the judge of the United States District Court holds forth, occupies the second floor of a modern building near the water. A short distance away, across a cool little palm and mango shaded park, is the most picturesque and pretentious building in the city, Christians Fort, the old red-brick stronghold of the Danes, built in 1671, as the date in wrought-iron figures on its façade indicates. At present this edifice houses the director of Public Safety, the government prison and the police court and headquarters.

We casually dropped into court one day to listen to a trial and before we had seen it through, some days later, we became acquainted—almost firsthand—with the nature of the majority of the troubles that have been afflicting the Virgin Islands and promise to become much worse before they are better.

The case on trial proved to be both important and pivotal. The prisoner was one Morris Davis, labor leader. He was a mild-appearing little negro, fairly light in color. He held the labor situation of the islands practically in the hollow of his hand, as one might judge on seeing several hundred workers worshipfully following him about wherever he went, seemingly ready to do his bidding regardless of what it might be. His power was shown when he called a strike on the government's Bluebeard Castle project. About one hundred of his people filled the limited space allotted to the public in the courtroom. We saw and heard practically the whole panel of the island exhausted,

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as the candidates failed—"ducked," we may say—to satisfy the challenges of the judge and the contending attorneys, especially after one look from Morris and his gang. The charge against Morris was perjury. Finally, a "hung" jury disagreed, bringing in a verdict of ten to two for acquittal, although the evidence seemed to be damning. The basis for their verdict, later divulged by one of the jurors, was one of revenge against the government. This reverts back to the still more famous and pivotal case of *United States vs. McIntosh*. McIntosh was convicted—he confessed his guilt—of unlawfully appropriating to his own use and profit government property. His conviction in the local court was sustained by a judge in the States, making imprisonment and fine mandatory. He was sentenced by Judge Albert Levitt of the Virgin Islands District Court. The governor of the Virgins—presumably acting on instructions from the Department of Insular Affairs, for "reasons" not altogether clear and equitable—not only pardoned McIntosh, but issued a long public statement condemning Judge Levitt. It was the culmination of a feud of long standing between an unswerving judge and a czaristic machine. The meeting of an irresistible force and an immovable body. It smelled of the politics that is making the Virgin Islands as malodorous a mess as it has made Puerto Rico. Feeling that justice was being obstructed, if not actually perverted, and that his efficacy in the future would be nullified, Judge Levitt resigned.

The effects seem to be that the enforcement of law and the meting out of justice will be crippled for all future time. The majority of the public—made up of blacks and



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mulattoes, long in a seething state of dissatisfaction with the policy of the ruling clique—now feel sure of discrimination against them. There is a growing Independence group. The Davis jurors argued that (Davis) guilty or not guilty, it is a more serious crime to steal, for example, than it is to lie; therefore, since the authorities pardoned McIntosh, they would do the same for Davis, whom the government had set out to “get.”

A couple of days' visit to the island of St. John—as the guest of the local commissioner and ruler, Dr. Edison, who lived there Robinson Crusoe style, ministering to and over a handful of natives, being provisioned every few weeks by a government supply boat—was illuminatingly disheartening. During our short sail of an hour or so from St. Thomas, over one of the loveliest stretches of water in the Indies, we ruminated over certain enlightening data that we had dug up regarding the vaunted present-day sterility of our unproductive Virgins. In 1725 there were 177 sugar plantations on the island of St. Thomas; on St. John, in 1733, there were 109 plantations and 1,087 slaves; in 1852 there were 40 steam-propelled sugar mills on St. Croix. In 1820, St. Croix produced 24,300,000 pounds of sugar; in 1821, St. Thomas, 1,444,000 pounds, and St. John, 1,100,000 pounds. In 1908 there was only one sugar mill left in operation on St. John. St. Croix's sugar crop in 1910 was 24,700,000 pounds; the 1934 sugar output of all the islands was approximately 11,200,000 pounds. Wild cotton growing all over the island of St. Thomas offers some eloquent evidence of what that product might do if encouraged.

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The worst black uprising that ever occurred in the West Indies took place on St. John more than a century ago, when twenty thousand people inhabited the island. Today there are only about eight hundred poor negroes dwelling there, scrabbling for a bare existence. In the main, the jungle has reclaimed its own. There are only a few rough trails on the island fit for horseback riding, and mule and burro transport. Nearly twenty years of American occupation, and no roads! Even on St. Thomas we came to the end of motor roads on the edge of nowhere after driving a half hour in any direction out of Charlotte Amalie.

Dr. Edison lives in what was once upon a time a miniature castle, with the remains of ramparts and cannon, and prison cells in his cellar where now are stacked about a hundred cases of canned corn beef, as though against a siege. Near by is an excellent bathing beach. We selected horseback riding as our diversion. The colored liveryman's name was Neptune and he rode behind us mounted on a burro, his long legs swinging until his feet nearly touched the ground. We rode for several hours over steep hills, ever and again a gorgeous bay of incredible color looming in sight, amid changeable and changing scenery that is the equal of anything of its kind in the Indies. A beautiful tropical island, once thriving, populous and prosperous. Bays the colors of Joseph's coat, alive with all the fish that sportsmen go to other far places to catch, with sheltered coves and peaceful harbors for yachts and sailing craft, and many paradisiacal homestead, club and hotel sites that could be bought for a song, but St. John has no singers. Just another barren Virgin that seems

absolutely stunned and bewildered over her sterility and just squats in the encroaching jungle and mourns, and very nearly starves to death, were it not for old Uncle Samuel and the dole.

Dr. Edison, philanthropically, as well as to avoid going crazy with loneliness probably and to keep his hand active in his true calling,—he had not been fitted by the practise of medicine to be a diplomat—has established a sort of homemade clinic, in great part made out of odds and ends, much the same as one might find on a little-known uncivilized island a thousand miles from nowhere, where a missionary and his wife have set up a first-aid station, ingeniously making good use of everything in their impedimenta. We shall learn presently that the British, French and Dutch order things differently in their colonial ménages.

It is a pity that there is so little more that can be said about neglected St. John. Nowhere in the world does a more lovely marine panorama unroll itself than may be seen during that couple of hours' launch trip from the island of St. John to the harbor of Charlotte Amalie. The fantastic gray rocky shoal with its cruel teeth contrasted with the green foliage and the yellow beach. Other gigantic rocks rise out of a gorgeous green-blue sea, the edges veneered with the brilliant gold of the dying sun. Like Berkshire marine scenery with hilly islands rising everywhere and growing purple in the distance. Faraway Tortola with all the other British Virgins rising in the background. The British maintain an Agricultural Station on Tortola, by the way, experimenting with cotton. The St. Thomas group now in the immediate foreground,

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especially the scarlet cliffs of Red Hook imbedded in waters of aquamarine. Spanish bayonets in full bloom line the shore, together with occasional golden yucca trees that spring up and then die within the year. The sky a deep cerulean blue fluffed with mare's tails hanging over the peaked roof of Tortola, with Big Thatch (British) and Little Thatch (U.S.A.) in a line like mounds floating on the sea. We pull into Red Hook Cove where Father Finn, the Boston Irish pastor of the Chacha Catholic church, is waiting in his cassock to receive friends.

We continue our voyage along Pillsbury Sound; past Frenchman's Cap, a bald rocky island, and St. James with its ruins of a great sugar estate. Joost Van Dyke with no whites living on it. Virgin Gorda (the Fat Virgin) with its interesting Carib remains; the round island of Anegada, that was said once upon a time to live on ships lured into its treacherous Horseshoe Bay, its white population mainly one English commissioner. The Atlantic is now on one side of us, the Caribbean on the other. St. Thomas is a beautiful sight; a majestic red rock barrier glowing in the sun; another huge rock of Pompeian green seamed with red. Buck Island Light; Morningstar Bay with the most beautiful beach. A symphony of colors: red, green and gold rocks; a rare copse of green foliage gilded by the sunlight, with a foreground of green-blue waters.

We are traveling, incidentally, in a government launch called *Santa Cruz*. Seemingly, it takes five colored employees to run it. In addition, we have on board a colored washerwoman in a voluminous white dress, a green basket

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hat, starched lacy undergarments, and carrying a laundry bag edged in handmade lace.

We pass the fortresslike house and fine estate of Petersen, butcher, cattle raiser and landowner. Take a good look at his luxuriant estate when they tell you nothing can be done with the island.

We take a final drive around St. Thomas, over all the roads they have, occupying about two hours, for which we shall have to pay from \$8 to \$10 for a four-passenger car—the highest price in the Indies. From King's Wharf, past the Municipal Hospital and Lincoln School, around Blackbeard's Castle and up the mountainside to Louisenhoj overlooking the town and harbor on the Caribbean side and Magens Bay on the Atlantic; downhill to the Estate Canaan, to the sugar mill ruins at Mandal, thence to Casey Hill, overlooking Sir Francis Drake's Passage, St. John and numerous cays, including Teach Cay, rendezvous of Captain Edward Teach, alias Blackbeard, to New Herrnhut, the first missionary settlement in the New World, over Raphuun Hill with its antiquated sugar windmill, to Sugar Estate. A side trip takes us to the Mangrove Lagoons and Turpentine Avenue. Another trip takes us to Lindbergh Bay and Brewer's Bathing Beach and back by way of the French village of Chacha. We have seen everything, and everything is worth seeing.

We sail off southward toward St. Croix, forty miles distant. The poverty and the political story remain unchanged, but the island is quite unlike its sister Virgin.

We cast anchor off Christiansted and our *Nerissa* is immediately surrounded by small boats: *Broadway*, *Mary Sunshine*, *Coney Island*. A scow pulls out, filled with

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laborers to handle the cargo. The whole population is on the dock to meet us: roustabouts, old mammies and younger women, most of them with babies. Fleming's Bus, painted yellow and named *Daisy* stands by hopefully. Near by is the pink-painted fort, the older parts built by the English, the newer by the French. A woman going by with a huge sheaf of rushes on her head like a pack donkey pauses and joins the onlookers. A stout colored policeman prances about importantly swinging his club. We are directed to the government telephone, where a long, lanky black hello girl with a low-cut flowered dress and a bright necklace is smoking away, trying to reduce a heap of American cigarettes to ashes and speaking a broad quock-quock into the telephone. A bed of sprouting cannons of ancient design holds several blacks sprawled like tired lizards. Several colored ladies are hanging around the gate and vestibule, one with a baby in a modern expensive pram. In fact, the whole town seemed to be mainly waiting expectantly for something that probably will never happen.

An impressive group of buildings face the wharf, yellow and white, with arcades. The many blacks in uniform, either armed or carrying police clubs, are both politer and pleasanter in their greetings than in Charlotte Amalie.

A donkey jaunting car drives in to join the observers, and several cars swirl about with no particular object and cover us with dust, for the whole island is as dry as tinder. We are regarded with great curiosity as we sit by and write our notes and seem to have something definite to do. We are threatened with darkness while waiting for our host because the island power plant was recently mys-

teriously burned up and the soldier policeman informs us that it will probably be six months before it will be rebuilt.

In the twilight the scene was luxuriantly tropical, with many great trees and rows of waving palms along the broad avenue by the sea. And when we drove back-country and saw the glooming silhouettes of sugar central ruins, windmill bodies and tall twisted skeletons of abandoned cane machinery, we could somehow grasp the old story more effectually.

We loved this island of St. Croix. It was so charming and restful, and we joined all the others at resting. Along-shore, we had passed seven abandoned ruins of centrals. They were everywhere, with almost the single exception of the government's experimental sugar and rum works. Sugar and rum; the more they make, the more they add to the overproduction that is helping most of the islands to ruin.

Travelers who need have no worry over the economic problems should love the towns of Christiansted and Fredriksted. The buildings were once palatial, with a new beauty added in a touch of pathos; here a charming wing built out over the street flirting behind a bower of bougainvillia. Rows of houses almost like those seen in Edinburgh. A large Catholic church with a busload of children being collected by nuns. A churchyard of many graves outlined with conch shells. The Church of England building on Prince's Street, that might have been brought piecemeal from Devon, with a deep dim gallery that we fancy might once have been used for slaves.

Finally, St. Croix has more and better roads than St.

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Thomas, over which we drove past historic manor houses each with its walled garden. Plantations of the past with euphonious names like Concordia, Wheel of Fortune, Peter's Rest, Anna's Hope, attesting their owners' imagination, that happily could not see the future.

A sea captain once put it to me in a few words: "Our one-time policy of expansion has changed. All we are seeking are markets, and we don't have to make islands colonies to become our markets. They've got to become our markets. Their value as producers of raw materials is no longer important and is offset by an appalling spectacle of unemployment that makes of them all poorhouses filled with paupers."





## Chapter Twelve

### FRENCH AND DUTCH ISLANDS—GUADELOUPE, MARTINIQUE—ST. MARTIN, SABA CURAÇAO

*The Cruise of a Lifetime—Voice of the Indies—Southern Sky—French Colonials and Blacks—Charm of the Towns—The Waterfront—Fort-de-France and Saint-Pierre—A Mountain Road—Mount Pelée—Passport and Luggage Examination*

IF one had but one brief tropical life to live, but a single cruise to make among the sun-drenched isles of the southern world, with perhaps only a few weeks to spare for a complete change of scene, climate and form of recreation from that of the strenuous beehive and stern rigors of the north, we should unhesitatingly recommend a comprehensive cruise of the Lesser Antilles. Not aboard a luxurious ocean liner, bristling with managed entertainment and blaring jazz from midday to midnight; visiting only the "hot spots" in search of a hot time, avoiding places of idyllic charm and enchantment with the idea that they must be dull. Rather, book aboard a homey and homely little vessel of a few thousand tons that idles along at maybe twelve to fifteen knots an hour, on which there is

no urge or pressure to do anything except what you jolly well please to do.

There are several such cozy little ships and several lines that make this Lesser Antilles paradise, but for the moment our recollection reverts to our trips aboard the tiny *Nerissa* of which we can speak in terms of seasickness and of lazy indifference, of endearment and of petulance, of eulogy and of censure, just as though she were an intimate member of our family, so well do we know her vices and virtues. We have called her an unholy roller in a high sea, and again an angelic cradle as we dozed for days in our deck chair, half rousing to watch a school of porpoises describing graceful movements in and out of the sea, or countless flying fish disporting themselves for the most part like skipping stones over the water's surface. One night we blew out a cylinder head; immediately the ship's doctor got out his fishing tackle, causing some passengers to suspect that he was at the bottom of the mishap just to furnish a fisherman's holiday. A lady passenger in the next cabin, who had risen in alarm when she found the ship had stopped, went back to slumber in peace when told by a smarty that we were ahead of our schedule and had paused for an hour or two to get back on it again. Meanwhile, most of us spent part of the night on deck in our pajamas while the engine was being repaired, smoking, chatting and yarning. That's the sort of houseboat she is and the kind of people she generally carries.

Our first port out of New York is St. Thomas and thereupon and thereafter our ship takes on the life, customs and color of the Indies by becoming a local ferry, excursion and freight boat between and among the islands, shipping

quantities of merchandise and numbers of passengers, and accommodating hosts of visitors and vendors, the port police or customs officers domineering the natives from the head of the disembarkation ladder with much talk that was accepted good-naturedly but little heed paid to it.

At Charlotte Amalie, for example, we took on board the home cricket team—mostly colored—on their way to play Antigua for the championship of the islands. A swanky bunch of blacks in helmets and blazers with insignia embroidered on their breasts in British varsity style. Whites and blacks alike saw them off with handshaking and huzzas.

And for sheer charm of atmosphere, we know of nothing in our traveling experience to equal certain evenings aboard, seeming just to drift on the sea, either with a full moon flooding the incomparable scene or under the luminous canopy of a tropical night dimly lighted by a million strange stars twinkling like heavenly candles overhead. We recall putting out of Antigua on such a night, leaning over the rail and looking down as though in a dream on the lower deck swarming with native "deck passengers," many of them asleep among their baskets and baggage. Stewards and sailors lolled about chatting in low tones; darkies sprawled all over the hatch. Suddenly, out of the midst of this human melting pot rose a musical expression of all that it ought to be. A little group had gathered with guitars and a mouth organ, one boy standing in front shaking a gourd filled with seeds, giving the Caribbean keynote and rhythm, his sinuous figure and gyrations just right; so were the tunes and tempo; the voices soft and the melody sweet as the native mango.

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The glowing cigarettes, the rising moon, the wash of the sea, the silhouettes of islands that seemed to float past—the voice, the song of the Indies in a perfect setting.

We remember another night, not moonlit, yet radiant. We seemed to be sailing head on into the Southern Cross, somewhere between Barbados and Trinidad. We could dimly see the white coats of the stewards or the shirts of the sailors. There was a new crop of deck passengers, quite different in character from those of the northern islands. Most of them had brought their own food, some were preparing a late evening meal; many had brought their own deck chairs and folding cots, while the remainder just stretched out like limp sacks on top of their belongings. Eight bells had just sounded forward, followed by an echo on the afterdeck and the watchman had just called down from his crow's-nest where he perched at the mast-head with his yellow light like an eerie jack-o'-lantern. This time it was sailors' songs; chanteys and rollicking airs, that reached a piercing poignancy when they sang "Londonderry Air" in harmony with the sad night wind.

Or, perhaps we just sit in silence and smoke on the top-most deck under the stars, rocked in the cradle of the deep, though the impression persists that it is the heavens that are rocking. Nearly every evening we took that bath of stars. An hour of it never failed to set us right with the world and helped to put the earth with its insignificances in its place. We are in darkness, save for a yellow streak from the open door leading down into the bowels of the ship, which are being fed cool air by the canvas "shark's fin" flapping overhead. The normal sounds of the ship are muffled by the night wind, the respiration of the ship's

engines is soothing to our placid state of mind. Just another tropical night—not like our hot summer nights at home, with the chilling coolness that often accompanies them. Occasionally, we raise our eyes to Jupiter, a living beacon that seems to rise out of the sea like a ball of blue fire; the true Southern Cross and its crude imitation near by. Every object in the night is filled with a meaning that strikes home, for up there in the darkness only God and ourselves know what is in our heart.

Those southern seas seem to be fairly afloat with islands, some of them so close together as to be barely broken off from their fellows. Our little *Nerissa* is scarcely ever out of sight of at least a couple of them:

Guadeloupe is not the first island we encountered after leaving St. Croix. It suits our purpose best to visit it at this point, however, and group it in a single chapter with all the other important non-British islands. Guadeloupe consists of two large islands—Grande-Terre and Basse-Terre, separated by a narrow channel, and five smaller islands, with a population of about 275,000. They have been in the possession of France since 1634. In 1934, 40,954 metric tons of sugar were produced. Imports were valued at 150,200,000 francs; exports, at 188,200,000 francs. This 38,000,000 trade balance in her favor for the time being at least scratches her off the list of white elephants. Incidentally, the two islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique are annual markets for nearly \$3,000,000 worth of American merchandise.

Even at 6 A.M., as we cast anchor in the harbor of Basse-Terre, the capital of Guadeloupe, it was easy to discern the French flavor and smell of the island. The

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church bells were ringing and the waters were lively with small shipping. In the customary manner of the natives, they soon surrounded the ship with their small boats, fighting among themselves for passengers. It was a tossup whether we should take the *Fleur d'Amour* or the *Grace à Dieu*, and as a lover of truth I must admit that the profane *Flower of Love* won over the sacred *Thank God*. *Miss Paris* also made a valiant fight for patronage. The big black boys in their small straw hats looked ludicrous at first, particularly because of the peculiar position taken by the rowers, one of them sitting at the extreme tip of the bow where oarlocks had been inserted.

The town was quaintly interesting from end to end; whatever and whenever built, everything was a replica of the Europe, or more particularly of the France, of that period. There was the typical *grande place* of France with the bandstand in the center. Atop one of the prominent churches was a heroic-size figure of Christ holding a huge cross, reminding us of a similar one in Marseilles. The natives spoke French with the same African quock-quock patois that is so resonant in their English. In the center of the square was a dais with a white figure of the Virgin and another of Christ with black hair and beard painted on. The Cathedral was impressive, with the Bar des Voyageurs close by. One hundred per cent French pictures were playing at the cinemas. The market was large, modern and clean, and near it was an elaborate fountain.

A peculiar architectural feature lay in the fact that all the government buildings—and they seemed legion—were constructed in ultramodernistic French style, which detracted from the quaintness until one got used to it.

This applied also to the effective War Monument (1935) with a chanticleer crowing on the top. The modernistic Palais de Justice made a loud gesture and the posters of a recent mayoral election would seem to indicate that Communism and Fascism had come to grips with violence. There were the usual harmless black beggars approaching us with a "Give me one you please one cigarette"; there was also a marked self-respect, dignity and offishness of the natives, in contrast with the poverty-stricken abasement and resignation found among the blacks of the British isles and the almost insolent and assertive independence of the American Indies. The system of colonial relations was absolutely different. The natives were French to the core. The French fraternized with them and shared home rule with them, with only a thread of differentiation between white and black. We saw black gentlemen garbed in spick-and-span whites with helmet and cane, little moguls in their own world; neatly dressed school children à la Français, the boys wearing high socks, loose knee breeches and bérets. Universal industry with strict economy was noticeable on every hand.

Our wonder and admiration for French colonial efficiency increased in leaps and bounds as we motored through the island over roads as good as any to be found in America, perfectly marked with white lines, admonitions and warnings, though piercing the heart of the jungle. Perhaps no other island has such luxuriant vegetation covered with a lush robe of deep green foliage; it made our treeless Virgins with their seared brown mantle of scrubby hills seem sickly indeed by comparison.

New wooden houses everywhere, concreted-steel poles

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for overhead wires, fine culverts and bridges; settlements with every house in excellent repair, each home with a porch and back kitchen, curtains at the glassed windows; well-organized farmsteads with substantial buildings; occasional well-dressed black women in flowered frocks carrying a parasol, wearing shoes and stockings; cemeteries with elaborate tombs; miles of bougainvillia, hibiscus and croton hedges; modernistic school building in a little village on the shore; cottages of standardized French colonial pattern, the simplest hut painted; numerous roadside shrines to the Virgin with cool niches filled with freshly plucked flowers, some with lighted candles, a great iron cross of Sacred Heart at the end of a village where the approach to the railway is clearly marked on a road sign; bust of Columbus in an enclosed plot, small well-built cockpit, a new church built in the new style. In other words, a deep and conscious feeling for beauty and an innate sense of culture for which the French deserve much credit.

Yet, on no island are the deep tropics and the jungle more in evidence. Mango and breadfruit groves in deep arroyos, piercing blankets of mist as we pass over high mountain ranges, banana groves on mountainsides, sweeping views of the sea and neighboring islands with a beautiful shore line of fantastic indentations, jungle growth crowding down the slopes; wood carriers, and women with huge baskets of washing on their heads coming from the neighboring water hole where a score or more of them are beating their wet clothes with a flat stick; an antique sugar-boiling shed with enormous steaming pots over charcoal embers, the sugar-cane area, the fields vi-



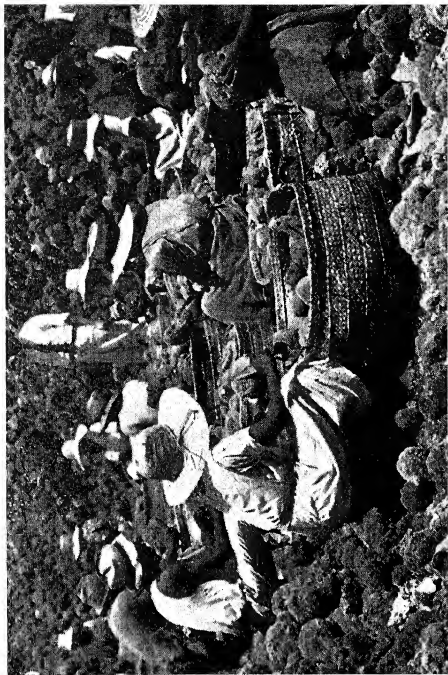
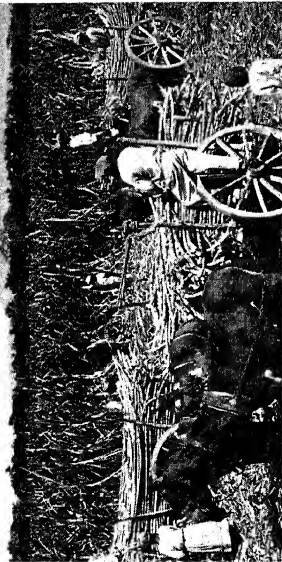
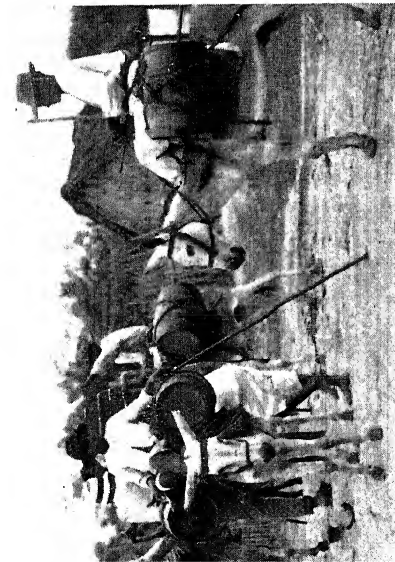
## WHITE ELEPHANTS IN THE CARIBBEAN

brant with cutters, bullock carts being loaded with green cane, the fields irrigated by an ancient aqueduct; farther on, we come to a giant sugar railway trestle crossing above the road at an elevation of fifty feet, with trains or cars in the valley being loaded by women and men.

Thus we cross the island of Basse-Terre and pass over the small Rivière Salée into the environs of the even more interesting and larger city of Pointe-à-Pitre, on the island of Grande-Terre. From the heights we had seen our little ship steaming alongshore and were afforded a good view of the other larger islands of the group: Les Saintes, Marie-Galante, Désirade. As we cross the drawbridge, there is exposed to view the great main that brings fresh water all the way across the mountains, since only brackish water is to be found on Grande-Terre. This is only one of the "features" of this successful French island that might be worth the serious study of a commission from our Virgins.

Pointe-à-Pitre is a typical Provençal city with a West Indian flavor. Added to the French culture there is a distinct touch of native beauty. The older women wear the gayest of bandannas always tied with a little fillip of a bow with the two ends sticking out on one side, with another kerchief worn loosely around the neck setting off the voluminous Empire gowns of soft rich colors of silk, the train tucked up on one side through a waistband. Gold earrings, necklaces and brooches complete the entrancing costumes. Market women, old women with baskets or trays on their heads and more prosperous housekeepers, all seem somehow to have had handed down or made at home these astonishing getups that distinguish the cos-

*Upper left:* Water boys, like these of Puerto Colombia, still supply the arid coastal towns of South America. *Upper right:* Cutting and sorting sponges is a major industry of Nassau. *Lower left:* White gold in the making—a sugar cane harvest in full swing. *Lower right:* Such primitive machinery is a common sight in the Caribbean.





*Above.* St. Thomas. Quiet during the sun-drenched day, Prusen C comes to life at dusk like Harlem on a Saturday night.

*Below.* Cartagena. More old world than new, this greatest city of

tumery of the French islands from that of their neighbors, although one finds sporadic examples of it on some of the English isles, either a relic of one-time French occupation or copied for the sake of its voluptuous richness. On the other side of the ledger, the time-honored system of French provincial towns of open sewerage maintains, with a constant flow of water through the gutters into which other things besides bouquets and cologne are emptied. So that one may add, the towns of Guadeloupe and Martinique also smell like Mother France.

The market of Pointe-à-Pitre is a riot of color, smells, noise and exotic produce and fish. It is a well-built pavilion within an iron-paled square, with Les Galeries aux Parisiennes hard by. Barbershops all in white enamel with every type of modern electric gadget for beautifying the male or female of the species, with always a sign: "*Cheveu décrépé*" (hair dekinked). Chickens are on the same footing with other tenants, scratching in tenement hallways among playing children, with perhaps a gamecock tied on the next doorknob. A dwarf parading down the center of the street with a huge sign announcing the appearance of another dwarf magician that night at the Lycée. A dancing academy over a butchershop, the master—a handsome mulatto gigolo with hair marcelled and pomaded—strutting up and down the balcony and giving the gaping passers-by a treat. We walk behind two elderly black women, prancing along with the dignity and grace common to all of them, obviously poor but proud in their once-handsome Josephine gowns of rich brocade silk, now in tatters. They pause with several others before the west

entrance of the great Cathedral, cross themselves and pray devoutly through the slit in the bolted doors.

We find our *Nerissa* lashed to the dock at Point-à-Pitre and proceed to wander about the wharves, perhaps the most interesting of the sights. A monster new submarine—*Acteon*—is being stared at by hundreds of natives. Blocks of warehouses are groaning with goods and humming with activity. Below, a hundred women are carrying bananas aboard a French ship, one heavy bunch on their heads, another under their arms, each neatly wrapped in heavy paper. A tiny donkey express brings up the family goods of a passenger: a trunk, a large basket, a deck chair and two demijohns. Opposite is a five-story apartment house, if you please, with a pergolaed roof garden and inset balconies of fancy tiles ornamented with window boxes filled with trailing flowers. Within the customs area are the Tourist Office, the *douane* and the government warehouses, all in tasteful modernistic style with blue trim; beyond, a stretch of concrete docks. Rows of two-story houses painted in colors, with iron fretwork balconies and dormer windows, French motor horns bleating all over the place—like Paris! Sugar mill going full blast right on the opposite quay.

As we move out of the harbor, we have a qualm. It seems like leaving France. The Cathedral with tower, huge cross and classical façade standing high above all. A dredge, a lightship under repair, a shipyard fabricating small steel ships. An island strip of tropical foliage, mountains deep in stormy mists, with the other French islands rising high in the dim distance, as we enter the open sea again.

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Martinique has been in the possession of France since 1635. It has a population of a little less than 250,000. In 1933, 48,215 metric tons of sugar were exported, and 3,110,404 gallons of rum; exports exceeded imports by 10,000,000 francs; 723 vessels cleared its ports. These figures are interesting, when speaking of the West Indies.

Our port of call is Fort-de-France, a city of about 45,000. There is the usual *mêlée* of small boats with a blue motif in decoration, bearing enticing titles: *New York*, *Enfant de Jésus de Prague*, with the United States and British flags lovingly crossed with the French. A dozen curious but graceful, sharp-prowed scows with square-rigged sails make for our side to take off the cargo.

From the water, the town is drab-looking, the residential section climbing up the sides of one of the green hills. Although it is early in the morning, the church bells ring sweetly and the French motor horns sound like hungry cattle with treble voices. Massive fortifications guard one side of the harbor. A row of gray institutional buildings covers the central hill. A semicircle of highlands embraces the enormous bay that is large enough to hold the whole French fleet, and invaluable as a practical naval base.

As we disembark, several boys in a blue rowboat come alongside and raise a huge fishpot that had been there overnight and in which there are only four small fish. We are landed at the foot of a large, somewhat bare park which contains, however, the rather lovely statue of their own Empress Josephine surrounded by eleven stalwart royal palms, with Josephine looking across the channel towards her native Trois Îlets. Near by is the Grand Hôtel de l'Europe, which, like all other newer buildings, is in French

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modernistic style. There is the usual herding place of native buses bound for all parts of the island, with a concrete shelter for passengers. A picturesque Renaissance church with four blue niches holding saints. The Tercenary Exposition Park. We find ourselves on a steep and circuitous ascent on the long drive across the mountainous country, to what was to us one of the most interesting places in the world—the demolished city of St. Pierre and its destroyer, Mount Pelée. The day upon which we made our last visit, by the way, was the anniversary of the catastrophe, which occurred May 8, 1902, and this fact added a little extra flurry of excitement shared by all the negroes on the island.

Our French horn was kept blowing continuously to give warning to the procession of marketeers that filed along the side of the road with heavily laden trays or baskets on their heads as they tramped with dignity and poise beneath the shade of the mango and almond trees. A large wayside shrine closed against the heat of the day, villas with elaborate walls and gates, the houses having tiled or corrugated iron roofs, a blue bus loaded to the mudguards, a cemetery, the white monuments shining in the dazzling sunlight, a large estate with the legend "Mon Petit Coin" over the gate, a flourishing coconut grove, a large shrine-cross of ornamental iron, a small hut under a breadfruit tree with a hedge of croton and banana trees, an ornamental gateway to a tiny cot with flower baskets hanging from the porch eaves.

Up and up, our driver, in white suit and very tan shoes meticulously polished, pointing out the sights in quock-quock English. At length we are confronted with a mar-

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velous sight, Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre, a huge basilica atop a neighboring mountain; a beautiful spectacle in white stone with a tall tower, the foreground waving with tall palms, as yet some miles in the distance.

Camp de Balata Hotel with a frieze of white pigeons on the roof; just a lovely mountain retreat with lounging seats on the broad veranda. Gorgeous surrounding foliage of lilies, palms, breadfruit, bamboo, tamarind, giant ferns and wild coffee. Every turn discloses new and magnificent views: deep gorges lined with precipitous rocky sides, mountain peaks, hanging vines, lacy trees, plants with leaves six feet long, parasite orchids. In beauty and grandeur it surpasses any jungle we have ever seen. Now we are surrounded by sheer cliffs a thousand feet high, with peaks a couple of thousand feet higher beyond. At a bridge, built in 1809, a native runs out with a huge bowl of red mountain berries, more delicious than strawberries. We cross a stream that forks down the mountain-side, over giant boulders until it is lost in the depths of the jungle. There is a giant tree in the very top of which gorgeous parasite growths have nested, waving like green funeral plumes celebrating their ghastly jungle triumph, for soon the tree will fall, strangled to death. Straight up we go, with concrete drains and walls protecting every turn from the inevitable mountain freshets, a 4,000-foot peak directly ahead of us. A mountain farm with cow and horse and banana trees in the great meadow front yard through which runs a gurgling stream. A little farther on a neatly dressed man carrying an umbrella in one hand and a machete in the other. A fork in the road, telling us that St. Pierre is 15 kilometers away, and then a clean-cut



tunnel piercing the overhanging mountain spur with a concrete sluiceway protecting the cut.

Unexpectedly we come to a turn where Mount Pelée stands revealed before us, a cloud clinging to and shrouding the vicious crater as though hiding its ugly face in shame. Its sides are rugged and filled with deep seams seared by molten lava, two broken bones of mighty boulders are dislocated from its powerful shoulder. Far down its sides we can distinguish white houses among the foliage, where there has risen a second St. Pierre, whose doom would be certain were the monster again to stir with fiery passion.

Our perfect road ends and we turn into a shaded lane flanked by sugar plantations. An outspreading sugar central house, bamboo posts for the wire fence, a bell ringing lustily summoning the workers. Mount Pelée again, like a giant Gila monster, growing greener as we get nearer. A well-ordered village with tile-roofed houses, concrete telephone and light poles. A lovely view of the blue sea with a carpet of fresh green cane running for miles down to its very edge. A huge concrete school building on the edge of town. A tiny sugar mill just above a deep bamboo grove. A life-size crucifix with a brown Christ hanging with bowed head as though from sorrow over the misdoings of near-by Pelée. A beautiful hundred-foot falls broken into spectacular fragments.

Amid these surroundings, as beautiful probably as any in the world, we begin to discover the first black lava boulders and then the ruined walls that were the dwellings of those forty thousand unfortunates, only one of whom escaped to tell the tale. Crumbling walls everywhere, shells

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of homes, piles of stones that once were foundations—all that is left of old St. Pierre, said to have been the loveliest, the gayest and one of the most cultural cities in all France's wide-flung colonial empire. Perhaps the most beautiful yet tragic excavation is that of the great theater, one of the finest buildings of old St. Pierre. Only a portion of the grand double staircase with the piece of statuary on the landing remains to give us any idea of the true grandeur of the building with its large auditorium, its tiers of boxes and great stage, that was blazing with light and buzzing with life and attended by the fashionable and the famous in this high spot of culture in all the Indies, just a couple of nights before the last. They all vanished, almost to a man or two who perhaps had left the island in time. Even the ships in the harbor were burned to the water's edge and every living soul became a seared corpse beneath that avalanche of liquid flame that melted the iron saints in the churches, fused steel and buried the dead beneath countless tons of white-hot ashes.

We were at a loss to understand how Mount Pelée—several miles distant with a deep mile-wide ravine between—could have destroyed St. Pierre, at least so quickly that practically no one escaped. When we visited the splendid new Volcanological Museum, however, and met and talked with Professor Frank A. Perret, who lives in a hut near the crater's mouth and was the chief instrument in founding the museum for housing relics excavated from the ruins, we were enlightened. "The inhabitants had the same disbelief in the power of the volcanic flow to reach St. Pierre—at least without giving them time to get out of the way," he said, as we stood listening to the internal

growlings of the fiery monster through a telephonic microphone that he had let down into the crater and hooked up with the museum. "The premature outbreak had been stewing for four days, the heavens were darkened, the earth was fiery hot, the streets were knee-deep in ashes, yet but few left. They thought that the end of the world had come, although they still clung to their goods and chattels and the churches were crowded to the doors when the blowoff came. It was the accumulation of centuries, seeking an outlet, encountering a hard crust and pounding and pushing with ever-increasing violence until the top of the mountain blew off, shooting the fiery contents for hundreds of feet into the air, emptying itself of untold miles of accumulation. It had become a titanic cauldron of pent-up gas. When it belched, it was no longer subject to the law and flow of gravity. It had the same deadly character as the liquid fire of the modern gas attack in war, only a hundredfold more terrible, high as the clouds and deep as the sea."

Back to Fort-de-France, private shrines lining the roadside and indicating that these are a religious people. A river runs through the town winding between almond trees, crossed by Venicesque bridges to the residential heights among coconut palms, with a pathway *Tout pour Bicyclettes*. Café *A l'Agréable Coin*, crowded with blacks à la Paris boulevards, where they sit long and talk volubly over their *vin ordinaire*, the tiny *Pâtisserie Suisse* wagons, a colorful market, an impressive Cathedral with something just a little barbaric about it, a typical French Gothic church with lacy ironwork spire, a dainty little park shaded with umbrellalike evergreens. But nearly every-

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thing, although as French as France, is in black and tan, even Madame who sits in every shop and restaurant in her elevated stool at the cash desk surveying business with a hawk's eye and calculating the amount of the sale before it reaches her.

Here we shall impose a brief interlude and mention of several other islands that belong to the non-British group. St. Martin is the first island after leaving St. Croix and is unique in being under half-French and half-Dutch dominion. It is fertile, is cultivated assiduously by its eight thousand inhabitants and, curiously enough, is prosperous. A new element is to be seen, in the spick-and-span Dutch method, that is a reflection of Holland itself. There are no hotels on St. Martin, although visitors may find good accommodations with private families.

Saba, another Dutch colony, may be reached in a few hours by a local boat at irregular intervals from St. Kitts. This island is perhaps unique in the Indies. Its two thousand inhabitants live in the almost inaccessible crater of an extinct volcano, calling their settlement "Bottom." Yet these people manage to get on, if not to prosper, on top of a seemingly barren rock covered with a little earth that even St. Thomas or St. John would disdain. The women make lace and the men for the most part are fishermen and sailors, fabricating their own boats, hauling the lumber up the eight hundred steps of "The Ladder" and lowering the finished boats over the sides of the cliffs into the sea.

Finally, we come to Dutch Curaçao. It is not properly of the Greater or of the Lesser Antilles group, but lies quite by itself off the coast of Venezuela. It is a favorite

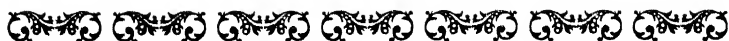
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port of call of West Indian cruisers and is regularly visited by several steamship lines. Peter Stuyvesant, governor of New Amsterdam, had been governor of the island. Curaçao was used by the Dutch as a base for their forays against Spanish galleons. In many ways it is as Dutch as Holland, in others it is a hodgepodge of all nations, having a polyglot language of its own called Papiamento. The people, like those of St. Thomas, have their water troubles and are also a "free port," but they manage somehow, through a combination of better administration and Dutch thrift, to prosper.

In conclusion, we return to a night scene aboard the *Nerissa* in one of the French island ports at night. The tiny twinkling town is vibrant with its French motor horns. All our black deck passengers seem to be leaving us, stirred to an undue pitch of excitement by a Frenchly officious negro shouting to bring their passports and baggage for examination on the tiny quarter-deck. There is a tremendous movement of basket baggage, the contents messed up by two French officers wearing gold-braided caps. There is much challenging, endless talk and gesticulations, but nothing serious really happens. Ragged porters assist passengers, winches whine and stevedores shout down to the man-powered barges as they lower cargo. Picturesque mammies tote their luggage on their heads, displaying yards of starched white petticoats under their Empire costumes as they descend the ladder. When brought to a standstill, women and children immediately squat African fashion. Boys yell from the waiting boats bobbing in the black waters far below. There is one very black, swanky disembarking passenger and his wife, and a pocket edition

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of himself also wearing a helmet (he is only four) that keeps tumbling over his eyes. This gentleman struts about with marine glasses over his shoulder, a camera protruding from his pocket. They have no end of baggage, including a puppy and two steamer chairs. Some kink in officialdom holds them up to the last and then they are bundled pell-mell into a waiting boat that is already sunk to the gun-wales with heaps of baggage and passengers piled up like meal sacks. The puppy and the helmeted little boy disappear in a crevice and the once-dignified black gentleman is crumpled among the others, as the overloaded boat starts toward shore.



## Chapter Thirteen

### THE LEEWARD ISLANDS—ST. KITTS, MONTSERRAT, ANTIGUA AND DOMINICA

*British Colonial Problem—Black Pride—Active Volcano—  
St. Kitts at Night—Nature's Variations—American Orange  
Grove*

As we approach these large groups of British black islands, it behooves us, in trying to get their true measure, to give a few moments' attention to the nearly one million black people whose predominant numbers and welfare give color, caste and concern to their rulers as well as to practically every social, economic and administrative act. We repeat, the West Indies, in the main, are a black man's country in more ways than we often care to consider.

The slaves, the blacks, the negroes, in the law of compensation, have become like the shirt of Nessus. The blacks are slowly but surely taking possession of the Indies. This is not news, but modern conditions give it new significance. The black man has been deeply affected by the so-called "modern trend," that pities, aids, elevates and agitates the underdog. Mass movement! Action! Already the blacks are beginning to see the light through mass and

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race agitators. What has long subconsciously galled their sense of injustice has now penetrated their consciousness. Already they can see their hordes marching to give battle to their terrible tormenters and supposed superiors. In these pages we have already met Stanley Clarke in Santo Domingo, Marcus Garvey in Jamaica, and Morris Davis in the Virgin Islands, carrying the Message to the populous Indies, where the great white crime began and prevailed, where the black man has no recognized rights, yet continues to labor and starve, where he is never equal to yet oftentimes outnumbers the whites a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand to one! The sullen, slow and sure rebellious rise of the negro under constant agitation—which is in key with the world-wide “rebellion” of our times and works in perfectly with the negro “idea.”

The Islands of Conflict. Conflict of man with nature and man with man, white with black. The hordes of blacks seem almost in league with their native jungles, that threaten to submerge civilization unless they are kept back, held down. A handful of whites have always held down millions of blacks. While the World War did not make the world safe for democracy, it successfully released the submerged masses against the privileged classes. For the first time in centuries, the black man sees a glimmer of opportunity in his jungle darkness.

For example, no one thing in modern or any other times has so deeply stirred the whole negro world as the Italo-Ethiopian War. From Harlem to Haiti, St. Kitts to Trinidad, they vibrated angrily and ominously, like buzzing hornets in a racial nest that was being ruthlessly threatened by a tyrannical urchin. We have seen



them gathered in market places, huts and halls, listening in sullen silence to a literate one of their number reading the current newspapers retailing the white civilization's latest atrocity in Abyssinia, or perhaps to some eloquent black agitator. They took it personally, felt it passionately and cherished revenge, regardless of the fact that the Ethiopians disown relationship with the whole of negrodom. Fantastic threats were made of joining up with the Ethiopian forces, and countercommands were issued by British authorities that any subject making such a move would be severely punished. We were told many times by resentful blacks that their people would never again volunteer to fight white England's battles. We have seen hundreds of half-delirious black people around a radio in the Indies listening to the victorious battle of black Joe Louis smashing his white opponent into unconsciousness and then conducting themselves like victors for months to come, and later Harlem was enraged and began an assault on white neighbors when the tables were turned on Louis by Schmeling. Again, the whole race became cocky over the outstanding performances of those remarkable black athletes at the Olympic Games in Berlin. All mere flashes in the pan perhaps, but they show how deeply the race question in world terms is being felt and agitated by the blacks along with all the rest—yellows and reds, Nordics and Semitics—in this flaming world of ours. Repercussions in the Indies at least show how the black wind is blowing.

As a race—some may remark—the black people do not hold up. That is hardly the best way to put it, for how many groups of whites could have withstood all the hor-

## THE LEEWARD ISLANDS

rors that have been heaped on the black man's body, soul and spirit? Yet they have survived in possibly increasing numbers with black body, soul and spirit intact, save for scars on their vision, subconscious wounds that never seem to heal, and unearned sorrows which they can never fathom. Under treatment never half so cruel as they have endured, the whole Indian race of the islands vanished in less than a century. Countless thousands of whites perished under its varied pitilessness. Only the blacks endured in the fullness of vigor, demonstrating that only the biologically fit—among themselves as well as the whites—can stand up through generations and centuries. True, the death rate among the young is great; hence, to survive disease, fever, malnutrition and other ills of overpopulation, they must be biologically fit, having already gone through a thousand deaths. The pampered whites so often perish from a pinprick. We have been told of black natives who were injured in the cane fields: with his arm hanging by a shred, the negro would walk a mile for first aid, have the arterial flow stopped and walk away again. Almost any civilized, nervous white person would have died in his tracks.

We repeat that, all said and done, the blacks and the whites cannot do without each other in the Indies. You may point to Haiti; but we can only shake our heads and say that Haiti is the exception that proves the rule. Read her history.

The negro is to a large extent the creature of his environment, to which he has a tendency to yield more readily than the white. His preservation, no doubt, is largely due to this characteristic of yielding rather than opposing;

but it imposes pitiless endurance on him. The lid will blow off only when the race reaches the starvation point. So long as they remain modern and "whitewashed," to be made "independent" or left solely to their own devices, they are in danger of an encroaching moneyless world and ultimate starvation. It remains true that the blacks as a people have to be roused from their own racial drowsiness and dreaminess; whipped occasionally—they are talking of reviving the lash in the British colonies—for their own good. The moment they get wholly away from the energetic lash of the whites they begin to go all-native, back to the jungle.

The marked differentiation between the French and the British West Indies is to a large degree the same as exists in this particular between the people by and large of the mother countries—one of culture. Through temperament and generations of devoted cultivation, culture has become innate to the average Frenchman. By the same token, we find a well-defined cultural feeling among the French negroes, as we have seen. Negroes are highly imitative and exhibit fine esthetic tastes when once cultivated. The British negro, as a rule, is crude, shiftless and without ambition in the way of artistic effort or manifestation. His native or natural love of beauty has been allowed to remain almost barbaric. Taxes on "improvements" as one of the means of raising imperial revenue among White Elephants has been shortsighted in more ways than one: depriving homes and buildings of the beauty and sanitation of paint, which in itself is a source of revenue, a source of labor and a means of preservation of property and so curtailing poverty.

There are sporadic and extraordinary exceptions, however, where black British subjects have become outstanding and fine examples of self-made men worthy of a place among the best of their white fellows; commanding personalities of intelligence and intellect, of governmental officeholding and local statesmanship. We met amazing examples of intellectuals among the common people: an old darky preacher who could recite nearly the whole Bible, a tailor who spouted Latin, a boy guide in a Botanical Garden who knew more about flowers than any ordinary mortal and spoke with an Oxford accent; but each case was one of uncanny imitative power and parrot memory, for there was an appalling blank the moment we left the one subject.

For all their superior well-being, however, we found the French negroes less happy than the English; happy-go-lucky in rags and solemn in riches. White culture goes to their hearts as well as their heads and depresses them with an inferiority complex. Unemployment is not such a heartbreaking condition with them, for they will seldom work longer than is necessary for mere existence and a bit of cheap finery; hence, the vast majority of them are penniless, and no matter how much they are given they want more and more. However, the white overlords must face the situation that, with the ever-growing population and the alarming decrease in the need of man power, the one-time value of the black millions is becoming dangerously low. Once upon a time the black man was the human machine; now the iron machine is slowly but surely trying to plow him under.

No halfway measures have ever been successful in gov-

erning the West Indies. America, please copy! The formula for getting on is simple, according to the British: sympathy, psychology, absolute sovereignty. The black people like the ceremony and pageantry that the English offer. The red coat of military officialdom seems to have been invented for their very need and is in itself a preventive against many political ailments. Their almost universal loyalty and devotion to the king is beautiful to behold.

Our introduction to the British Lesser Antilles is altogether a happy and auspicious one, for none is more typical than "Sinkitts" (St. Kitts, or St. Christopher), the northernmost island of the Leeward group. As we approach it, we are impressed with the fresh green prospect in contrast with the more arid and brown Virgins that we have left behind. Furthermore, St. Kitts is a darky island from end to end.

The usual flotilla of small boats makes for our side the moment we are moored: *Miss America*, *Lady Allen*, *Victory* (with crossed British and American flags painted on the stern) and the launch *Cheerio*. The boats are the trimmest we shall see, with a deep blue lining, the seats and floor brightly carpeted. One contains three singers, with mandolin, shells and gourd accompaniment, performing in pure darky style. They are followed by two large loading sloops, the decks swarming like flies with half-stripped black navvies.

Although St. Kitts is proudly called "The Mother of the English West Indies," since it sheltered the first English colonists to gain a foothold in the Antilles, the capital—Basse-Terre—retains its French name. In the

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background rises Mount Misery, an extinct volcano, its 4,000-foot green cone crowned with a chaplet of mist.

The hinterland opens up the essential character of the island in a way that the very Anglicized seaport town does not even suggest. We picked up one black John Wesley sitting in his car just in front of the Catholic church on Basse-Terre's Pall Mall Square, surrounded by substantial stone buildings. We favored him from the first because he had a huge bunch of roses set up on the dashboard before the plaque of St. Christopher, patron saint of the island and blessed guide of all travelers.

Less than half an hour out of town we were in the midst of sugar cane—green fields waving about the skeletons of abandoned mills and around bases of former wind-mill towers. In the distance, however, we could see the smoking stacks of at least one mill in operation, surrounded by a row of rickety huts for the workers.

We passed close to Monkey Hill, the chief source of supply in the Indies for these pets, or pests, as you will. The road was lined with robles in full fragrant blossom, interspersed with files of giant palms, its bed sustained by ancient, well-made side walls and bridges. Every indication of substantiality and prosperity belonged to a day far distant from this poverty-stricken era. Everywhere women at hard labor, in rags and generally disheveled; hoeing cane and cotton, carrying every conceivable object on their heads, or washing in squatting groups by every shady stream.

The keynote of the island seems to be sugar. Hillsides and valleys are seas of varicolored waving green, six-ox teams drawing cane to tiny railway trains; baled sugar

husks are used for fertilizer; every ghastly central ruin has a windmill base standing guard—suggesting the persistence with which the natives of present-day St. Pierre again stake everything under the shadow of Pelée that had all but destroyed them.

Nature is everywhere bountiful, loaded trees furnishing breadfruit in abundance, papaya and panjy-anjy trees growing at random, many herds of goats promising the luxury of milk. A gorgeous tropical panorama dips from great heights into a sea the color of precious stones. A straggling settlement of African huts suddenly terminates at the beginning of a once-stately wall with a typical English stone parish church beyond and a sign: "Caution—Beware of Trains!" Another stone church, this time of the popular Seventh-Day Adventists, with a stone in front of it: "10 miles to B/terre."

Huge black rocks of lava have rolled down from Mount Misery into the sea. When we stopped on the shore to admire the prospect, we were immediately surrounded by as sorry a group of mothers—carrying babies and with children of all ages clinging to their ragged skirts—as we saw in the Indies. They reminded us of East Indians or Chinese, as they stood there, half-mute, muttering "Gimme a penny!"—even the babies stretched out their hands.

Every village had its series of taps of stone where villagers came for water and stopped to gossip. There was an occasional school, with classes reciting out in the open. A stone church "Built in 1922" made us wonder how they managed it. For all their poverty, they were a seemingly happy lot, always smiling and friendly.

From various high points we could look down on neigh-

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boring islands: just across a narrow channel lies St. Kitts' sister isle of Nevis, where our Alexander Hamilton was born, later taking a clerkship on the island of St. Croix, whence he made his way to the mainland colonies; the Dutch island of St. Eustatius and, just behind it, Saba rising like a huge fortress of solid rock out of the sea.

Brimstone Hill, with its zigzag fortifications in three ranges, is the most astonishing and picturesque sight on the island and merits being called "The Gibraltar of the Indies." This formidable fortress is an eye opener to the present-day visitor and reminds us of the titanic struggle that attracted the mighty fleets and forces of the Old World in the conquest and protection of the Indies that today have degenerated into scarcely more than a happy hunting ground for tourists. It represents England's final gesture of successful resistance against Spain and France's plot to prevent her ascendancy to preëminence as a world power. For all its formidableness, scarcely a shot was ever fired from its guns. The view from the towering rocky ramparts is inspiring, not only because of its lovely landscape, but also for the store of historical recollections that it brings up. At one time the island was divided between French and British occupancy, and was not ceded to England until 1782. An early settlement of the English was promoted by Captain John Smith of Pocahontas fame, but backbone was not given to the colony until the population was supplemented by shiploads of convicts. Captain Horatio—later Admiral Lord—Nelson was stationed here for a while in his pursuit of the French and Spanish fleets that ended in England's decisive victory at Trafalgar. At that time the little island of Nevis was



a brilliant spa owing to its famous healing springs, and there Nelson met and married the Widow Nisbet.

We look down on the Lazaretto, or leper colony, once a French fortress, the green-splashed hills of sugar cane almost touching its walls, studded with an occasional stately palm. A trail of black lava rocks leads to the open fissure on Mount Misery that was alarmingly agitated with sympathy when the top blew off Mount Pelée. Ruins of sugar centrals repeat the oft-told story of more prosperous days.

How different these islands appear at night. St. Kitts is lovely in the early evening, with its sloping hills of green and gold patchwork, the tops of its high mountains almost black and scarfed with clouds. Huge barges with patched sails tack in and then dash against us after their flying start; a fleet of bobbing small boats, with lanterns at their sterns, discharge their cargoes of blacks, trunks, baskets, boxes and bags with which the porters struggle up the side ladder, piling them on deck helter-skelter; the black soldier shouts down the name of the boat which may next approach. Finally, the tumult dies; the last boat pulls ashore with its fifteen-foot oars; the cargo sloops hoist their bellying sails; all disappear in the darkness toward the dim-lit town. We leave them but a shadow of brooding mystery off our stern.

The Soufrière, or smoldering volcano, seemed to be the most promising exception on the island of Montserrat when we landed, but we made one of those "discoveries" that never fail to delight the heart of the traveler. Furthermore, our visit threatened to be disturbed by our becoming the victim of a local "racket."

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We were met by the usual small boats in the water and sightseeing cars on shore. We paid our fare for what ordinarily covered several hours' motor drive, but when we had driven less than twenty minutes our boy informed us that we had arrived at our destination. We protested. He produced the legal tariff and explained that it would take us the full time to tramp from this point up to the Soufrière and back. He would wait two hours for us under yonder mango tree. That simply was the way the thing was done on this island, so we fell in line—a habit learned in Rome.

The crater looked to be but a few minutes' walk across the countryside, but at the end of an hour's tramp we scarcely seemed much nearer. The illusion was caused by the fact that the smoking hole is not on the top of the mountain but is torn in the side of it only a few hundred feet above its base. It was a thrilling and worth-while experience because of the almost bucolic approach that suddenly changed into the scene of a dynamic cataclysm, the whole mountainside wrecked, giant boulders scattered about like children's blocks, a noisome heat that burned the soles of our feet and the smell of brimstone brewing in the most horrible-looking hellhole we have ever beheld. We suggest a visit by all means, because the traveler will probably never find another living crater so easy of access and so ugly and fearful.

We had always hoped to find an antique sugar mill and central come to life with all the concomitants of the ancient practices and tradition—a smoking brick chimney, an old rambling mill with its primitive machinery and boiling open vats, the darkies with their donkey carts

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loaded with green cane, the planter personally overseeing the job. We found it in Montserrat, almost the last detail.

Following the single main road beyond the path leading up to the Soufrière, we met a striking panorama and told our man to continue as far as he could drive. Scattered huts, rocky river bed, stony country not unlike Connecticut; mangoes, loaded burros, ceiba trees in full bloom, sweeping fields of Sea Island cotton in the boll, women mason helpers carrying large stones on their heads; breadfruit, bananas, Spanish bayonets; cultivation to the very tops of the hills, although the country does not look so fertile. Limes and lime juice are important factors in industry.

Suddenly, we found ourselves deposited in the sugar-mill yard, with scores of carts and hundreds of darkies working after a fashion or hanging around. There was a single white among them; he was the planter himself, a tall colonial, quock-quock speaking gentleman, who welcomed us with true "Southern" hospitality. It was all very significant because of the interrelationship that must have been common to all the islands before the modern machine gobbled them up in its maw, destroying not only their means of livelihood but also their social amenities, approximating something of a balance of social atmosphere so consistent with black temperament. Happy-go-lucky, we might term it. It could not last much longer under the severe strain of the modern industrial and economic juggernautery that is crushing the social and industrial setup of the nineteenth century from top to bottom. There were altogether too many persons about to be sup-

ported by this antiquated affair. Native blacks brought in their own crops and shared in the output, giving them a fine sense of being planters too. We were shown through the steam-clouded mill with the ancient low-pressure grinder and open vats of boiling syrup that was being dipped by hand with wooden pails. We looked at the old boilers, steam hissing and escaping at rheumy joints. The darkies crowded around us, some of the idlers playing guitars and everybody seemingly content and happy, but obviously poor as church mice. The planter invited us to his mansion for a drink, and there we were impressed with the same air and charm of Yesterday dancing on the edge of the pit that Today has dug for it.

It is a common error to believe that the Antilles—or the whole of the West Indies, for that matter—are more or less identical. This is not true even scenically, because each island has definite contour and character that differentiate it from all the others. Antigua, the seat of government of the Leeward Island Confederation, is quite unlike her sisters, St. Kitts and Montserrat. For one thing, it is low and rolling, its highest hills less than a thousand feet above sea level. True, the cultivation of sugar predominates, but pineapples are added to its staple crops.

We enter the harbor of lovely green waters, on which the government has spent \$1,200,000 in a vain attempt to clear it of treacherous sands; a sailor at the bow with a plumb line musically calls the depths so that we shall be sure to anchor at the right spot in the brackish channel. The negro families and their colorful luggage are shifted to clear the hatches, the noisy winches begin their whine

sweetened by the ship's bell sounding the hour of five. Launches approach black with visitors, and the passengers line up in their bathing suits ready to go ashore for a swim.

A semicircle of green mounds—a white castlelike building on the point of one, a windmill ruin on the brow of another—is obscured for a few minutes by five negro-manned scows, a lovely sight for all their dirty, ragged sails, the navvies stripped to the waist. The bathing beach is reached by a dock and a gateway through the wall of a picturesque obsolete fort with ancient cannon mounted on the parapets, the grim sides thick with foliage, the gnarled roots spreading out like sleeping serpents over the stones.

We remain aboard, for we are bound for the capital-town of St. John, a couple of nautical miles beyond, past jagged rocks that rise above the tide like rotten teeth of a giant sea serpent, past a rocky island at the end of which are buildings of the Antigua Distilling Company, the landing stage picturesque with its cluster of grimy sloops, the old walls prettily embroidered with fan palms and bougainvillia.

At the gates we are picked up by several insistent guides, that are finally whittled down to Charles Martin, although his presence was *persona non grata*. We were further discomfited for a time by the too-near presence and the excitement created by a tourist who raised a nine days' sensation by parading in trousers, bare back and sparsely draped breasts, much to the disgust of the womenfolk of the town. The charm of the town was enhanced by a lovely green park and extraordinary Botanical

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Gardens. Black boys by the score playing cricket, shoals of nursemaids with perambulators and little charges ranging in color from pure white to jet black, old mammies wearing red bandannas just resting and looking on, boys picking up the husks from "shell" trees that are sweet to burn.

There is something indelibly English about it all, that is further emphasized when we visit the great Anglican church with its well-kept churchyard, crowded with ancient tombs of white governors, clergymen, soldiers. The tiny firehouse minus an engine owing to a recent fire, a well-set-up Catholic church, the bell just ringing the Angelus hour, a pretty, large cottage with fancy lights at the gates indicating that it is the Family Circle entrance of the movie house, the New York House Hotel, Defense House where the militia and Boy Scouts hold forth. Near the Bishop's Palace we pass the bishop himself, and Charles Martin doffs his battered hat.

Then we stroll about in the twilight hour, quaint ginger-bready houses giving the better streets an indefinable charm, tropical flowers filling the air with fragrance and every open plot with color. An old woman straight out of the nursery rhymes leads a pet dog on a leash and tells it stories as they hobble along. We follow her up side streets behind the Cathedral until we are outside of town; then we turn back into the city, now like an album of genre pictures: tiny homes like packing boxes with mothers getting dinner, men talking together out front after the day's work, barefoot children playing hopscotch. Reluctantly, we stroll back to the launch, picking up a polite colored gentleman in khaki, with helmet, wing

collar, tie and cane all a size too large for him, which does not lessen his pride in them. Policemen in white and in blue greet us politely, "Good evenin', gentleman!" The crew of our tiny *Lord Nelson* is in full uniform of battleship tars. We take our last look up the wide High Street, alive with women in colorful garb, everybody chewing sugar cane.

The moon is just rising as we prepare to leave the harbor. It comes up through a break in the clouded backdrop, like a lighted candle in a dark cell seen through the window. St. John twinkles in the shadow of its conical hills.

Dominica, the largest of the Leewards, deserves a chapter by itself. Though 300 square miles in area, less than 100,000 acres are under cultivation, largely because of its rugged and mountainous contour and the sterile character of much of its volcanic soil, for it has many extinct craters and several uncomfortably active ones. The highest mountain towers five thousand feet. The island has had a stormy career almost from its very discovery by Columbus. It was fiercely defended by its native Caribs and then fought over by the French and British until 1763, when it witnessed one of the most important naval battles between the fleets of those two nations and Rodney defeated de Grasse.

On landing there was the accustomed rush of small boats with fanciful names, and cargo boats that look like huge African dugouts.

We landed at Roseau, the capital, where dwell a bare handful of whites. There seemed to be but a single road to a mountaintop farm operated by an American.

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It was not a road at all in our motor sense of the word, just a mountain trail, and on some of the sharp grades stones and rocks were still in their native state. It produced an odd sensation to find a New England farmhouse after plowing through seventeen miles of volcanic mountains and native jungle. Cleared fields, grazing cows, modern garage, pop into a dooryard that is a bower of well-kept lawns and gardens, surrounded on all sides by deep tropical forests. From a mound in the garden we look over a deep-tangled gorge into a lovely valley surrounded on every side by high mountains—our host's hundred-acre orange grove.

From beginning to end, the drive was dramatic, critically so at times; there is no other just like it in the islands, skirting breath-taking gorges and coming upon gorgeous glimpses of the distant sea. Rows of tamarind trees waving like silken screens across the view, women washing in mountain torrents, abandoned sugar mills, palms and mangoes as though galloping down the mountains into the sea, a seaside road sheltered by porous cliffs, right through an old sugar estate now devoted to rum, a field with many Asiatic bulls grazing; papayas, limes, bamboo; poverty-stricken settlements of African huts, one of them bearing a sign: "Public Midwife"; up the heights again, where we find a sugar plantation; a score of children waving at us at every turn, all seemingly happy; a nutmeg grove. Then we plunge down into a valley, its sides rising sheerly like prison walls, where we come upon a band of convicts wearing square caps, under guard of a single officer. It might be Adirondack scenery turned tropical, sprayed with bamboo,



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plumed with palms, fronded with giant ferns. Now a gash in the mountains shows a slice of heavenly blue sea framed in greenery. A string of native women with baskets of bananas, mangoes, breadfruit on their heads; a four-year-old child who had probably never seen a motor goes into hysterics and the mothers scream with laughter. A mountaineer on his donkey, a sugar knife in his hand and a basket of feed on his head; a grove of cacao, the pods red-ripe. The shadows deepen and bring out a dozen shades of green, the distant sea blends with the gray-blue sky in wispy streaks. A vanilla house where all the beans from the surrounding country are dried; a man and a woman, she carrying a heavy basket on her head and he an umbrella to protect him from the rays of the sinking sun. Roseau again. "Forty-second Street" is playing at the movie house, dress circle seats thirty cents. Our driver tells us that they used to think Charlie Chaplin the "best joker ever come across—until the talkies came."

And so, we finally take ship by way of *The City Sparrow*, a jaunty little rowboat with a lantern on a stick at the stern, two oarsmen assisted by a paddler. It is a thrilling sight: the flotilla of native boats with their hordes of passengers trying to get on and off, our passengers looking over the rail high above, the ship aglow from floodlights, the rising moon reflected in the rippling waters. The shore is an undulating silhouette of dark mountains, with occasional lights twinkling on the heights and stars dotting the indentations like diamond brooches holding up the blue canopy.



## Chapter Fourteen

### WINDWARD ISLANDS—ST. LUCIA, ST. VINCENT, GRENADA, BARBADOS, TRINIDAD

*Three Guides in Place of One—Salvation Army Rally—  
Sympathetic Eruptions—Sophisticated Jungle—The Grena-  
dines—Colorful Panorama—East India in the West Indies—  
A Lake of Pitch*

THE variety of the West Indies is infinite, to use a hackneyed phrase with truthful implication. As we pass from island to island, our especial interest is aroused and gratified, by one attraction here and by another there. Much depends upon just what our particular personal interests are: beautiful scenery, extraordinary phenomena of nature, extinct and active volcanoes, tropical flora in all its luxuriance, native life and customs, ranging all the way from the palatial residence of the dark dictator of the Dominican Republic to the Dahomey huts of "Sinkitts," interesting evolutions produced by governing nations and local character of people and idyllic charm of surroundings.

In our case, it was the unforgettable genre picture of St. Lucia that impressed us most. Like many of the other

islands, St. Lucia was a battleground between French and English for the better part of three centuries, until it was finally ceded to England in 1814. Even today many of the older natives speak a French patois, and an air of French culture still permeates the atmosphere of Castries, the capital city.

The beautiful sheltered harbor looks like a green mirror with the red-roofed houses dotting the hillsides partially reflected in its placid depths. Palms plume the foreground and a hilly peninsula stretches for several miles out into the sea, with a white margin of shore and a string of coniferous emerald islands basking in the sun beyond.

The White Elephant shows his tusks in the barracks atop the splendid fortifications above and behind the town, consisting of an extensive layout of buildings, now deserted by reason of an international naval agreement. Substantial brick structures, partially occupied as tenements by private families. The gun emplacements are just rusty remnants, with children playing among the antiquated cannon and cows placidly grazing on the parade grounds. Black boys pounce on tourists and try to sell them sapadillas big as grapefruit and mangoes for which they have no desire. The ascent is accomplished by way of many sharp and disturbing curves shaded by camphor, mango and flame trees. The view is tropically lovely and comprehensive. The 3,000-foot Pitons are half hidden in the clouds, the Morne nearly five hundred feet higher; on the other side of the island the sea curves into a graceful bay, the ships in the harbor looking like toy boats in the distance.

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It was the town, however, and its colorful native "pictures" that always engrossed us on our several visits and in certain of its aspects surpasses all others. For variety of merchandise, especially fish, the market is a priceless sight, particularly on a Friday night when every variety of edible beast is tethered in the purlieus ready for tomorrow's slaughter.

My inescapable guides on one occasion were three in number, one officially accepted—Charlie Chaplin, by sobriquet; the other two were hangers-on who disclaimed nearly everything said by Number 1 Boy and stepped up at the end of the trail for their reward, although they had been told twenty times in no uncertain language that they were *de trop*. "He ain't name Charlie Chaplin, boss," one of the pests informed us, "that's oney a lie to get American trade."

We chose the witching hour of twilight for a promenade whenever we could. The streets seemed half dreaming then, gently and lazily alive, the harsh and sharp engravings of midday softened into shadowy mezzotints. We caught the languid tempo and could somehow feel the negro temperament as though it were a poignant chord of music. For we were all alone in that curious black world on its little island surrounded by a tropical sea, except for our three black aides padding along in their bare feet and chattering, themselves giving the true keynote. Without comment from them, we could stand as long as we wished before ugly remains of the great fire that some years ago destroyed the business section of the town; linger near the convent to hear the church offices being sung African style; pause near men playing

checkers in the shadow of their hutlike homes, watch an old woman "grinding" coffee grown in her own back yard by pounding it with a heavy stick in the hollow of a tree trunk, just as they've been doing it ever since Carib times; or contemplate the picture of a well-set-up woman in bare feet, wearing a French bandanna and kerchief and carrying an enormous basketful of mammee apples on her head, balancing herself with a staff, one hand outstretched towards us into which we placed a penny.

There was one fascinating night in particular, an hour or so before our ship pulled out, when all things seemed to conspire to make it memorable. The darkling but beautiful hills softly silhouetted against the velvety blue heavens; the lights on the topmost peaks scarcely distinguishable from the stars, so intimate did we seem with the sublimities of nature, save that man's lights were yellow as compared with the blue-white diamond sparkle of God's lanterns, the Southern Cross resting its foot on the top of the mountain as though it were Calvary, its fainter right hand marked like a glowing nailhole in the night.

Lined up against the mountains of bunker coal to lure the passing ships of every nation, however, was a scene that outdid the Theater Guild's *Porgy*. What characters—or "naturals," as Broadway would put it! The whole town had come down to see the ship pull out, the scene garishly illuminated by high-powered electrics. Old mam-mies in Martinique style with the bows of their turbans sticking out like gay horns, their woolly hair braided and brought into view in two loops. All the vendors sitting behind their piles of native wares: baskets of every shape and none without its esthetic lines, jars of ginger

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and guava jelly, colored and colorful strings of exotic "beads"—of fish scales, sharks' vertebrae, tiny cockle-shells, Job's tears and dried seed kernels, "funny faces" ingeniously fashioned from mammoth seeds and nuts. Each stand with its own smoking light illumining a round, shiny, kindly black face. "Now don't you go an' fergit Mary Pickford sittin' right here before your eyes befoah you git back on dat ship, white gentleman!" said one with a coy look as we were leaving the wharf to pass through the government gates lorded over by an officious white-uniformed black guard.

For, far up the dimly lighted street our listening ear had caught the strains of a melodious overtone that seemed strangely inconsistent with the rest of the scene. We followed the direction of the sound deep into the town, pausing on a corner of the High Street, now thronged with native life. Just round this corner a Salvation Army meeting was in full swing, perhaps the most ideal rally in the world. There was no holding in or back, no sophisticated mental reservations. It was the pure essence of religion. They simply let themselves loose emotionally, wading soul-deep in spiritual exaltation. We could see it shining from their luminous eyes, in their simple gestures of ecstasy; it flowed from their bodies in rhythmic abandon, and, above all, in a glorious flood of melody: "He's the 'Lily of the Valley,' the Bright and Morning Star! He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul!" Irresistibly the whole outside circle joined one by one. Men and women and boys came running from far down the street to plunge into the pool of ecstatic melody, clapping their hands, tapping their feet, raising their eyes

heavenward; enraptured, exalted, divorced from the earth. A beatitude utterly denied us white sophisticates, "to see the glory of the Lord!" How we envied them! That black circle of an alien world, the ring of rolling eyes glowing with mysterious light under the glare of smoking torches, the piercing sweetness of negro harmony sung in every register, with the weird obbligato of cornet, bass drum and tambourine, the full moon pausing overhead as though spellbound—an exotic scene from which only we were excluded.

We stole back to the ship, avoiding contacts, moving to a far end of the deck where we could be alone and hold that rare vision close to our heart—where we have treasured it ever since.

Islands follow thick and fast. St. Vincent, for example, is only thirty miles south of St. Lucia and not more than that distance from Grenada, our next port of call. For a time, we were deceived in St. Vincent, and felt the same sort of isolation from civilization as one finds in the fiction pages of many a book and play. Major contacts with our known white world, common at least in some small degree in all the other islands, seemed in the main well-nigh lost; then they would suddenly pop up out of the black and blue. To have had the ship pull out and leave us there—and it would be a long, long time before another pulled in!—would have given us the sensation of being marooned. This would have been no hardship, since part of our quest is to find and experience just such rare adventures.

St. Vincent is heavily blanketed with junglelike forests and shaken up violently betimes by its Soufrière, which re-

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acted in sympathy with its fellow and neighbor, Mount Pelée, in May, 1902, taking the lives of two thousand of the inhabitants and devastating about one-third of the eighteen-mile island. From a distance Mount Agarou, rising four thousand feet, seems to be carrying half the island with it into the sky.

Sleepy little Kingstown seems to lie on the edge of it all with its five thousand inhabitants, black with but few exceptions. We took a rowboat bearing the classical name of *Erato* and began our limited pilgrimage that kept bumping us into sharp points of sophistication just when we had begun to fancy it appallingly absent. There was drama in the constant contradictions. We were just nestling down in the native charm of the tiny black city when we bumped into this sign: "Sanitary Bakery—Nothing Touched by Hands," operated by Mr. Sardine.

Then we drove out into the hills and found an amazing state of high cultivation, although coconut trees were being chopped down over a wide area. Copra had been one of the island's chief exports, but another part of the world had stolen the market and then overproduced. Sea Island cotton is being planted in its place. We entered a stretch of open country, where we got a view of the sea, with some of the hundreds of Grenadines that dot the waters like floating seaweed, and the rock-studded harbor. The Easter blossom trees bloomed like huge red poppies.

A turn, and we find ourselves looking down on the Aquatic Club surrounded by a cluster of bungalows with red-striped roofs! Fields of sugar—of which the island produces its five thousand tons a year—with a sugar king's mansion atop the hill, an overseer riding picturesquely



over the rise. Good roads through massed hills and deep valleys, with half a dozen ancient sugar-mill ruins or wind-mills always in view, cane interspersed with arrowroot. Down by the shore again, scattering a herd of goats being led by boys carrying huge bundles of wood on their heads, yet laughing at their scampering charges.

The countryside turns Scotch; the coast is wild and rocky with rough seas, a bleak moor and shaggy hills. Argyle Beach. Just a St. Vincent interlude, however, for we make a hairpin turn, cross a pretty bridge and land in an African village. We come upon a beach with coal-black sands and an array of jagged black boulders protruding uglily from the sea, like ghastly characters in a tragedy, whose blackened trail we can trace to a worn stream of lava running down the mountainside. A little farther on over gentle hills like the downs of Surrey, we come upon a sugar estate, the workers crowding around the mill to be paid off; their batey on the side of the neighboring hill. Ruin after ruin of windmill and sugar factories of old, a lone darky strolling along playing a banjo adding a bit of color. Huts no bigger than hen coops, with a Gothic Catholic chapel overlooking the sea. We see our first ancient windmill in operation, its huge wooden wings patched, its movement slow and rheumatic; picturesque, but impractical. Five old royal palms guarding a sweeping valley, a bay shaped like a conch shell with a fringe of palms and a miniature "sugar loaf" island like that in the bay of Rio de Janeiro. As we come in sight of Mount Bentinck, we pass scores of market people, the women a pretty sight in their bright-colored dresses and bandanas, all with heavy burdens on their heads, hurrying

through the mauve twilight. "Dey's afraid of the 'Jumbies,'" laughed our chauffeur. "Dey wants to git home and whistle three times out de back door." In one section the hills are terraced, giving an odd touch of Japan, the impression carried further by a roadway strewn with blossoms. We come in sight of Gospel Hall and realize that we are back in town.

It was all as different as night from day, not only from its sister Indies, but from all the other islands in the world. Our cup was filled and ran over—with a Bentinck St. Vincent's rum punch—in the upper lounge of the Pelican Hotel. One should not miss this, just at twilight, watching the tropical sun sink like a glowing ball of gold into the turquoise sea, with everything in tune. The bar is on the lower floor, but the place to drink is on a sort of balcony abovestairs. An English gentleman of the Piccadilly type sat there too, drinking his Scotch and soda.

When it is quite dark we walk beneath the arcades to the wharf. It is crowded with natives: fruit sellers, vendors of candies too rich in color to be true, watermelons and the finest, biggest and richest papayas to be found in the islands; all talking seriously, donkeys braying, some old darkies carrying lanterns; a single shop is open and the scene within under the yellow lamplight is like a Currier and Ives print. With the exception of the boat boys and their touts who dart out to lead us to our waiting *Erato* willy-nilly, our presence is scarcely noted. Somehow, at this writing, St. Vincent—that promised so little—seemed too good to be true. But it turned out to be surpassingly good and true.

The Grenadines are a more or less contiguous strip of

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volcanic islets stretching out almost the entire distance—a journey of six hours—from St. Vincent. On the whole, these Little Grenadas are rocky with comparatively less vegetation than the mother island, some merely protruding rocks, others not more than an acre in area, affording a beautiful seascape to break the watery monotony.

Grenada is one of the islands of livable native charm that we choose for more than a passing glimpse. It differs from many of the others in that its charm is to be found in its tiny capital of St. George, as well as in the country areas. Beginning with the small boats with their bouquets of flowers fastened prettily to a mast in the stern, to which is added a lantern after dark, Grenada has its own peculiar brand of attraction that differentiates it from its fellows.

We land at the General Post Office, a stone's throw from the Cinderella Hotel with the market in an open square farther up and down the High Street over the hill. It still has some of the smells and patois of France, from which it was finally wrested in 1784, after intermittent battles and possession lasting nearly two centuries.

We drive first through a pretty little seaside park, coming suddenly upon the Queen's Park Race Course in a more or less open field with a makeshift grandstand. Half the urban population seems to be coming into market with loaded baskets on their heads. Our course out of town lies beside a lazy tropical river with a huge cotton-silk tree leaning over its edge near where we turn into open country, narrowly avoiding an overcrowded bus careening downhill at terrific speed. The road scenery is gorgeously native. A little wagon filled with fagots, cacao and bananas, ornamented with bouquets of flowers, a bakeshop on wheels,

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a roadside butchershop with all its varieties of meat nailed up on the outside. Stray goats and uncultivated bougainvillia, a Catholic church half in the shade of a giant breadfruit tree with the family donkey braying at the door of a near-by hut, happy-faced women in all tints of dresses.

A sharp circuitous ascent beside clifflike walls dripping with exotic vines and grasses; up and up, winding over entrancing ravines, little huts clinging to the sides, with more hills in layers ahead, with an occasional group of tumbledown huts and hordes of children in rags. Banyan trees, mangoes, bamboo, lacy ferns of a giant variety; cutting through the deepest jungle, a tangle of battling nature, bushes with enormous leaves, strangling vines and snakelike ropes among which giant trees have fallen. A breath-taking view from the heights deep into the tangled wildwood that only the ripest tropics knows, with wild monkeys chattering in the trees, until at length among the low-hung clouds we reach the brink of the Grand Etang, an unhealthy-looking body of green water in the crater of an extinct volcano, the ugly banks sliding into it more and more every year. We return by another route through gullies with red clay walls frescoed with giant ferns. Vales filled with gardens of mottled rocks. They call this section "The Land of Spice," ornamented as it is with red-shelled nutmegs and cinnamon; the nutmegs spread out to dry in the sun. Cleared country, with farms spreading right over the mountaintops, sheep and goats grazing on the sides.

French culture breaks through the black hide of English cultivation now and then, as when we see a party of women beating their washing with a stick on a stone be-

side a stream—arrayed in Empire gowns, or hear a minstrel going along the open road playing a guitar and singing *chansons* in French patois, or study the squarish form of some of the older houses. St. George is quite French in appearance, for all the typical English Parish churches on several of its hills, reached by picturesquely shelving streets.

Like the town and country folk of the island, we always come back to the market, which unlike others in the southern Indies is held out in the open square with only the shade of a few sparsely leafed flame trees in full bloom. Along one side is the bus station where one may see types from all over the island—who can afford the price of the fare.

There are two ways of entering the town from the wharf: one up over the hill at the top of which the black traffic cop, white-coated and helmeted, directs you with the aid of a swagger stick; the other passes through the Tendall Tunnel, a costly bore through solid rock, probably cut for some military purpose. It mattered little which road or path we took—up the hill to the Parish church, down the hill to the Catholic church, into the town, with its Bar & Grocery selling “Strong Rum 1/6” and its naïve signs to attract trade, past the tailor’s with his four flat-irons in a brazier on the doorstep, or down a side street with quaint groups, some with baskets on their bandannaed heads chattering in half French—we always found charm, and of an order that belongs only to Grenada.

Every visitor to Barbados forms his own picture of that island before he arrives and, incidentally, finds it nothing like what he had expected. It is altogether an extraordinary

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place in many respects. Its history differs from that of the other islands in that it seems—for reasons not easily understandable—never to have been an island of conquest. It was discovered by Columbus in 1493, first visited by the English in 1605—fifteen years before the settlement at Jamestown, Virginia—and settled by them in 1625, also calling their first settlement Jamestown. Later, it became a Royalist refuge, declaring for Charles II. During the Cromwellian War large numbers of Irish and Scotch prisoners were sent there as slaves, their prices being fifteen hundred pounds of sugar each, and they were treated worse than the black slaves. The island saw many black rebellions put down with inhuman cruelty. Major George Washington's only foreign visit was made to Barbados. All Americans should pay a visit to St. Michael's Church where he worshiped.

Barbados, although only 21 miles in length and 14 in breadth, has a population of approximately 175,000, making it the densest—with the exception of China—of any country in the world. Only 15,000 of this number are whites. Again, sugar was at one time its savior. During the World War it brought them a king's bounty—for the last time. The sugar industry was the only one that could possibly employ the enormous floating labor. "Work or starve!" is the watchword of an overwhelming number of blacks. In 1933, the unfavorable trade balance mounted to something around half a million dollars—which was more than made up by heavy taxation, however; England's way of balancing unfavorable accounts. All said and done, Barbados appears to be the biggest Black and White Elephant in the Indies.

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As a tropical island, Barbados is disappointing after the dramatic scenery of most of the other Antilles. There are palms and sugar cane, but the soil is a semicoral formation and makes the dustiest of roads. There are no mountains; the greenery is nothing to boast of, partially owing to the fact that with such a dense population almost every foot of it is occupied.

There are many amazing institutions, however, resorts, beautiful beaches with always a lovely coast line. Only fifteen miles from Bridgetown is the famous Codrington College, the only one of its class in the British West Indies. It consists of a fine group of graystone buildings in the mullioned Georgian style. Harrington College, also founded more than two centuries ago, is another outstanding institution, physically and intellectually. Turner's Hall Wood with its neighboring Boiling Spring furnish the chief bits of natural tropical scenery, but they will seem a little tame after the journey we have been making.

Bridgetown and its immediate surroundings and resorts will continue to absorb all the interest at our command, no matter how often we visit the island. A single stroll down the fascinating High Street serves as a sufficient reason for calling this "Little England." Its irregular course, beginning at Trafalgar Square, its shops and merchants, the Anglican Cathedral and its walled-in churchyard and sepulchers, all bordering on Cheapside, are as British as though made in old England.

It was the teeming life of the waterfront and its environs that captivated us, however. No small harbor city can furnish such a varied picture of color and atmosphere.

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There were nine ships in the harbor—one Norwegian, one Swedish, one French, one German, one American and four British, two of which were from other parts of the Empire than England. Their sailors and passengers added to the pageantry ashore and became the prey of the worst vultures in the Indies. Sometimes half a dozen black boy "guides" would attach themselves to our person and had to be either beaten or bribed off. On one return, after many weeks' absence, we were claimed by the same three culprits as their very own; and they not merely guided us, but dictated to us.

We know of no place in the easy-labor world of today where men strain every sinew in their toil as they do in Bridgetown. It is a magnificent sight to see four of them manning a single huge scow employed in lightering the cargoes from ship to shore: one at each corner with a heavy twenty-five foot oar, digging it into the water, actually in his tremendous exertion climbing along the side of the barge, hanging in mid-air, his half-stripped body shining with sweat, until he has pulled the barge its own length through the choppy sea; then repeating the operation again and again. It is a spectacle to see a score of these barges being maneuvered into the carenage, or lagoon, which is the lodging place for hundreds of them.

A bewildering panorama: a welter of humanity struggling for a penny, ever delightful in its contrasts of staid English and loose blacks; all in slow motion, vivid in color, vibrant in tone. We begin at the customhouse on its little island, cross the carenage over a drawbridge and find ourselves in Trafalgar Square beehive. A score of buses loading and unloading, a taxi stand and its yelling



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chauffeurs, swarms of pestiferous youngsters; dozens of refreshment wagons, a file of West Indian coster carts with huge negroes asleep in them, the bawbee woman who goes about with pail on her shoulder and a spigot which she expertly turns and draws a favorite drink, boys selling spiderlike lobsters, the smiling old cane vendor, groups of roustabouts, stevedores and loafers eating the breakfast their women have brought them, shooting craps or sleeping under the green trees by the Nelson Monument, the whole populace quock-quocking and being dominated by black policemen with truncheons. Along the busy wharves under the surveillance of the Harbor Police, in their half-sailor getup of straw sailor hats covered with linen, army boots and belts with a gold crown buckle, the streets half blocked with hogsheads of molasses, sugar and rum in a dangerous state of commotion. On to the huge concrete market, with hundreds of half-tame blackbirds flying about as scavengers and an interesting slaughterhouse in the rear, emitting a continuous squealing, bleating and bellowing, a procession of negresses filing out of it with pigs' heads and pans of still-warm blood for making the popular blood pudding. Out to the villa section, through a lovely avenue shaded by a mile of royal palms, every house behind a wall English style, the better residences faced with blocks of coral stone sawed out of the ground as in Bermuda. The seaside resort—at times uncomfortably like the backways of Asbury Park—beyond, to the bleak savanna with its race course and golf club, one corner of which was only lately part of a sugar estate. A fishing village, a darky settlement, beautiful Christ Church on the bluffs, with everybody in that section carrying water

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for miles around; American windmills and herds of imported milch goats; the Almshouse jammed to the doors with the black spawn of the White Elephant.

We have left the southernmost end of the Antillean islands as a fitting tailpiece to them. Trinidad brings to us shades, colors, differences and contrasts not to be found in any of the other islands. Indeed, in surprisingly few particulars is it comparable at all. True, it is a tropical island and a British colony, like the others. Yet, geologically and in an actual catalogue of its flora and fauna it is of a piece with the South American continent, from which there is every evidence that it was broken off. In how far Trinidad is English in character is also a moot question. And to a degree, neither its town nor its urban population is overwhelmingly Afro, giving the general scene a less liberal coat of the tarbrush. Broadly speaking, scarcely a more cosmopolitan place exists; it is so deeply imbedded in the community life and activities, customs, religion and social intercourse as to render a rare exotic and kaleidoscopic picture and impression.

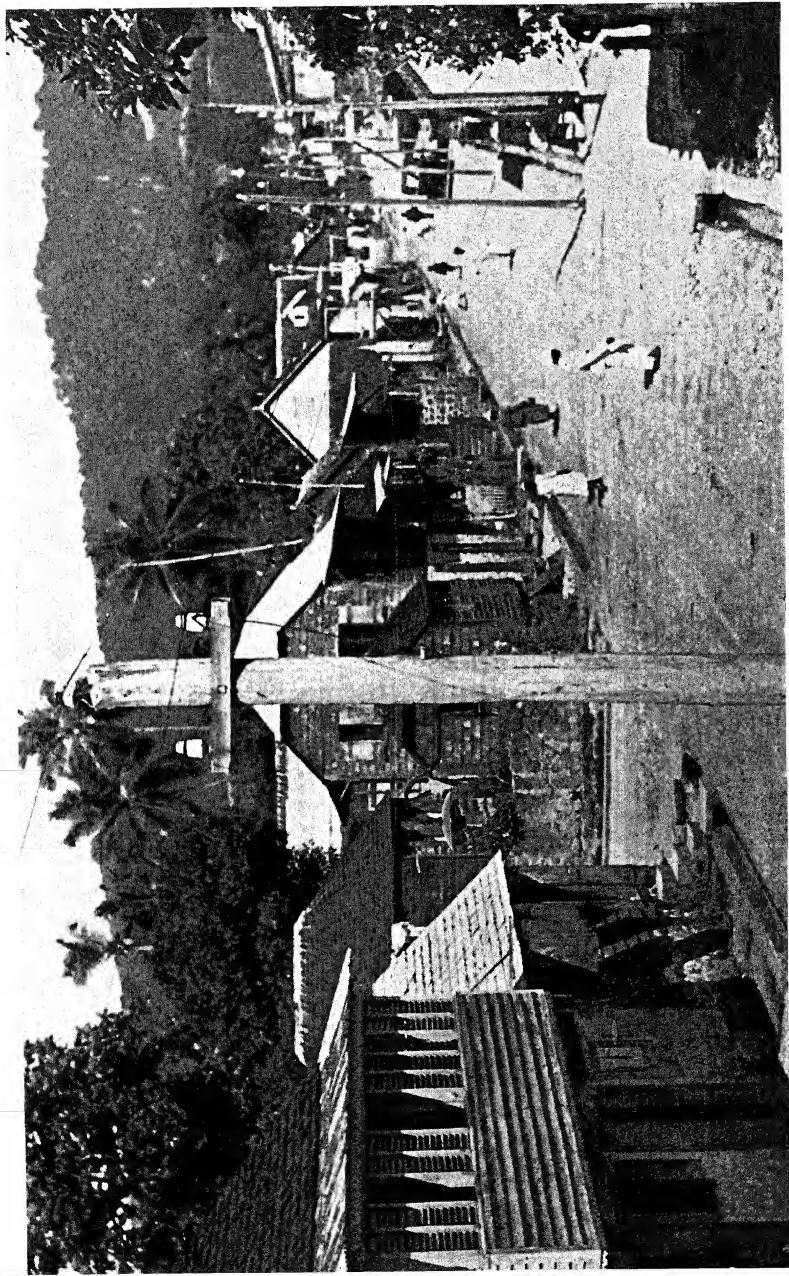
Trinidad was discovered by the ubiquitous Columbus, in 1498, and was held by the Spaniards for nearly a hundred years. Then that gentlemanly privateer or pirate, Sir Walter Raleigh, came along, burned the city and put most of the inhabitants to the sword. It was successively taken by Dutch and French marauders of the near-by Spanish Main, and finally fell into the hands of the British. Since 1797 it has been under their rule. In 1839, owing to a shortage of black labor, an experiment was made in this field by bringing over an enormous number of East Indian coolies, under indenture. The venture was a suc-

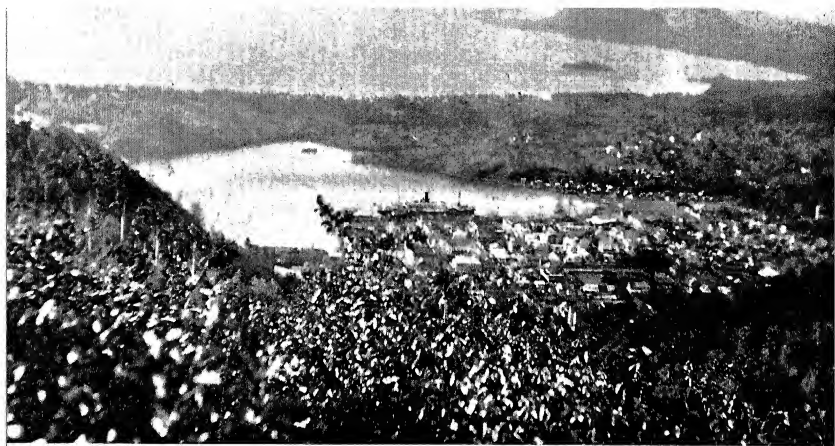
cess; moreover, the coolies liked it and prospered. Every class and caste was represented. Parsees, Hindus, Brahmans and Mohammedans—at least seventy-five thousand of them today—firmly established themselves and contributed one of the dominant notes. But in the early days, French islanders were imported by the thousand; Spanish-Indian-Black mixtures from Venezuela and other South American countries—in clear view just across the straits—are in constant flux; in addition, there are great numbers of Portuguese and Chinese. Their languages, customs and presence make the populace a gaudy fabric with John Bull stalking possessively through it all.

We had a definite purpose in visiting Trinidad, which was to see that World Wonder, the Pitch Lake, and we shall pay our respects to it at once, incidentally taking in the marvelous background of the island on the seventy-mile hard drive out of Port-of-Spain, the capital and metropolis. No other island, perhaps, offers such an intricate pattern of natural and human colors.

Bullcarts loaded with wood, roadside watermelon markets, bus after bus serving the crowded villages, a bamboo farm with its factory for making bamboo paper boxes, the way dotted with giant saman trees with hundred-foot branches, mahogany and rubber trees and miles of coconut groves. A beautiful little white mosque, holding fifty worshipers perhaps, walled in and painted like a Persian rug. The inevitable sugar estates. Hindu pedestrians with their heads wrapped and wearing loincloths. A little farther on an Indian village, with many red flags on bamboo poles, indicating that prayers are asked by the households. A sugar estate: the mill is grinding cane; the

For the traveler in search of the picturesque, Roseau, Dominica, offers plenty of local color.





*Above.* The lagoon-like harbor of St. Lucia permits ocean liners to sail right up to the quay. This is the tropical setting of most West Indies harbors.

*Below.* This small, modern sugar plantation in Grenada is typical of the independent industries.

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cutters and bulcart drivers are Indians. An occasional old negress leading a pig to market, with a basket of bananas on her head. A Hindu wedding, the sound of whining pipes and drums within and a gay crowd without, being harangued by the priest, one hand on his rosary, the other holding his white turban. Indian huts always distinguishable from the African variety by some touch of beauty—a curve, pointed palings, latticework, pinnacle at the peak of the roof, suggesting some of the rare, sensitive beauty of their own features; so mystical, unsmiling, calm, serene. The rich tropical foliage, all in sensuously beautiful array as though on parade. Chin Chin Road and Calcutta Road in a small town with the government court in session and a picturesque crowd of negroes and Indians listening to the red-robed judge through the open windows. A street market that might be in India; the women with their delicate blue blouses and rose saris, bare feet with silver anklets and bracelets, gold earrings and nose rings and rosettes. A town of flowers; when they are not growing in the yards or billowing over the walls, they are hanging in baskets and pots on the porches. Rows of tall cabbage palms and hedges of hibiscus. A grove of pic wood, tall, straight and strong, used for masts and flagpoles. Three black babies being washed at once in a tub in the front yard. Pointe-à-Pierre, with Trinidad's largest oil refineries and a lovely view of a muddy inlet. Rugby and cricket grounds near scores of oil tanks and mountains of coal briquettes and India's latest and greatest talking picture announced on the billboard. A Hindu cemetery with a fresh grave, a white flag flying and the plot covered with a low white

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awning edged with rows of tiny white flags. Britannia Bar and the remains of very old Spanish houses, as we enter San Fernando, that might be a town in India, with its profusion of Oriental women, men and children in costume, with trays on their heads, squatting before their exotic fruits, fashioning silver ornaments in doorways. A big English department store, white-helmeted black police, white-clad Britishers, Hindu priests, and a beautiful mosque. Cane being loaded at a wharf, scores of bull-carts waiting, the black boys lying off and sucking green stalks or mangoes. Buses named *Sweet Violet* and *Talk of the Town* pass us, filled with blacks and Indians. Canadian Roussillac Mission School. Two Indians on a motorcycle pause to buy a loaf of bread from an old colored woman who goes from house to house with a screened box on her head. Mon Désir Road and a sign: "Paramount Hotel, 8 Miles," where we are passed by the "Port-of-Spain via Fyzabhad to Erin" bus. A little farther along, the sides of the road show indications of having been dipped in asphalt, so we know we are nearing our destination.

One of the features of Pitch Lake is its model industrial plant, its administration unit, resembling that of the Panama Canal buildings, with all their spaciousness, stilts and screens. They did not have to tell us that our own "nation of sanitary experts" had built and controlled them. We next visited the works and saw the raw pitch being boiled, refined and poured into hundreds of barrels arranged in circles, and then conveyed by a remarkable trolley system for more than a mile to waiting ships in the harbor.

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Pitch Lake will be disappointing to some. Its hundred-odd acres look just like an unsightly bog of half-dried black mud. We walked out to where some of the men were taking out the pitch with a peculiar mattock; our heels stuck occasionally, if we happened to step on one of the shining bubbles, and our footprints showed if we stood long in one spot. Motor trucks could move over it, but had to have broad boards under the wheels if they paused, else they would sink. Not all scientists are agreed on the origin of the lake. It seems to be on the order of a harmless volcano crater, into which the cold yet flaccid residue of a once-molten mass has been slowly ejected by natural gas pressure. Thousands of barrels of asphalt are removed annually and the lake is said never to recede, but Mr. Vandenburg, the superintendent, told us that this was not strictly true. During his time of less than twenty years the body has fallen many feet and it is his belief that the supply will be exhausted surely before the end of the next twenty-five years.

Short excursions via land or water within a day's journey of Port-of-Spain are numberless. We have spent many such days. We had especial curiosity to visit the setting that inspired Noel Coward to write *Point Verlaïne* in which we saw Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. The play had been so disagreeable, they told us, that it put the boardinghouse of the same name out of business. It gave us an opportunity to sail around the five famous islands in the Boca through which most ships pass on entering the harbor.

We conclude then with a panorama of Port-of-Spain. We caught a reflection of the body and soul of the town



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one Sunday, when we dropped in at High Mass at the Roman Catholic Cathedral on Marine Square, with its polyglot congregation: British hard-boiled sailors wearing all their medals, many Indian converts, a Chinese, darkies of every shade and variety, from venerable old gentlemen with choker collars and string ties and mammies in Martinique style to modern dandies in tight suits. Nine-tenths of the congregation was black, the deacons and the acolytes were all black, but the priest was white. Somebody's donkey hobbled just outside kept interrupting the strains of the Mass. We discovered an old black woman sitting on a box just across the park selling mangoes with her prayer book in hand devoutly following every gesture of the service; near her were two Indian women with their wares, their faces half hidden in their bright saris.

Later, we sat on a bench in a cool green park beside the beautiful but cold and locked-up Anglican Cathedral and recorded the subdued Sunday vibrations of Port-of-Spain, always with its faint but persistent odor of the Orient hanging over all, especially in evidence as a Hindu family files past. The turbaned father and son lead the way, mother and grandmother follow, their saris floating in the breeze, their score of anklets and bracelets clinking like manacles of servitude worn without change for two thousand years, sons and daughters in modern English togs trailing in the rear. The Greyfriars Scotch Presbyterian Church opposite, not far from the Labour Temple of the Dockworkers, Carpenters and Joiners Union with the red flag of Communism flaunting from every gable. Bosco Hall across the way, where a Soldiers and Sailors Ball is announced for the King's Birthday, music by the Patriotic

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Boys, refreshments served by the stewardess; admission for ladies 12 cents, gentlemen 24 cents, price doubled in the evening. A couple of Venezuelans pass by, gesticulating and talking volubly about nothing, in Spanish. Delhi House, Travelers and Pilgrims Society, Schneider's Pawn-brokers, Creole Pharmacy and the Furniture and Bedstead House—Cash or Easy Terms, within a stone's throw. We stroll into the town. Ice House Hotel with the Miranda near by, loungers everywhere, barefooted women gazing hungrily into the show window of Fogarty's big department store, displaying a smart array of shoes, a soft-drink stand on wheels in gaudy colors, named "Ethiopian Sport," black policemen strutting bobby style on every corner. Indian ragamuffin beggars, with long beards and staffs identical with those seen in Bombay, Oriental Beauty Parlor ("Hair Straightening a Specialty"), Moore's Art Centre and Dolls' Hospital; Coffee, Copra and Tonca Beans Wholesale, Venezuelan and Foreign Currencies Bought and Sold, Broadway Establishment, the Indian in the doorway purring, "Lady bracelets one dollar—I make it fifty cents. My first sale, gentleman, I make it four for a dollar." The bracelets were made in Japan and may be bought in Woolworth's for ten cents. A Chinese pushing a hokeypokey cart, J. Toussaint, Tailor, Rob Roy's Sport Hotel, Golden Gate Bar, Salvation Army's large headquarters. We venture to say that, after the Great Fire, they certainly built up an ugly town in its place; gaunt buildings of the warehouse type honeycombed with ratholes for the poor or profligate alien element.

Invariably, we wound up at the Queen's Park Hotel for tea, perhaps after an oft-repeated visit to what we con-

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sidered the most interesting Botanical Garden in the world. That section of the town bordering on the public green, with its cricket field and race course, its many mansions and flower gardens, was typically English of the familiar sort that we could well afford to sacrifice in our choice of more exotic subject matter.

Finally, we find ourselves on the docks, near the friendly Tourist Bureau. Here we may take the twice-a-week boat to Tobago Island, generally identified as the scene of *Robinson Crusoe*, and other scenes with which we have already become familiar, and so end our Antilles Pilgrimage. In our humble opinion, it is on many counts one of the most astonishing, fascinating and gratifying tours to be found anywhere in this wonderful world of ours.



## Chapter Fifteen

### THE BAHAMAS—NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE

*A Stroll about Town—Sponges and Turtles—Dirty Dick  
and (another) Blackbeard*

WE turn homeward; back to the beginnings of the West Indies and the New World.

The Bahamas are directly in our path; we can scarcely avoid them. They lie almost within an hour's airplane flight from the coast of Florida; in fact, they are permeated, for better for worse, with the familiar flavor of Palm Beach and Miami, which, unhappily, is destructive of exotic charm. For all that, the international ferry, the airplane jumps, the frequent triangular service between New York, Bermuda and Nassau, and the habitual stoppings of popular cruises, have not spoiled the Bahamas. The sea divides them from the States, the unyielding British solidarity stands guard and the tropical West Indian inertia embraces and caresses them.

The Mecca of the Bahamas is Nassau, situated on the island of New Providence, where a great modern hotel has been set up, happily outside the quaint English-West Indian town. The popular American bathing resort, Para-

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dise Beach, is located on Hog Island, offshore, so that, too, is beyond the pale of its quaintness. Having disposed of them, we may browse about the island and the town without fear of the intrusion of the "American idea."

The original inhabitants of the islands were called, by the discoverer, Lucayans. Because of their indolence, they were soon exterminated by the Spaniards, who sent most of them to hard labor in the mines of Hispaniola. In 1647 settlers came from Bermuda, and founded New Providence—now Nassau. For nearly a century the island was one of the chief haunts of the buccaneers, who made the neighborhood the base of their marauding expeditions and the scene of many of their debaucheries. In 1782 a force of Spaniards captured Nassau and held it for some months, until it was retaken by Captain Deveaux of South Carolina. In 1784 the colony was put on a solid footing and the population doubled by the arrival of Loyalists from Georgia and Carolina with their slaves. During the American Civil War, Nassau became the headquarters of blockade runners and enjoyed a period of unparalleled prosperity, that was not again approached until this day of American tourist runners.

On our first visit to the island it was our good fortune not to be able to land off Nassau, because of a too-heavy sea, and we were forced to anchor round the corner in South West Bay. This compelled us to drive through seventeen miles of open country alongshore, thus taking in the majority of the suburban "sights."

From the sea the low island looked like a dark green strip of seaweed floating in a deep blue sea, outlined by a lacy collar of foam where an angry surf was breaking.

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News of our arrival had spread and black boys came flocking across the island and by sea in small boats from which they dove for coins as usual. One of them wore a pair of trunks made from a flour sack plainly stamped "Pillsbury's Best." Another wore a plug hat, which he never removed from his head as he disappeared beneath the translucent waters. It was a lucky break for the taxi brigands, who alone collected something like a thousand dollars for transporting our heavy human cargo back and forth to Nassau. It was a rare collection of wheezy old cars fit for the dump, nearly half of them succumbing before they had covered the seventeen-mile journey. Tire trouble was the principal malady and only a few of them carried a spare.

The waters about the island were gorgeous in all the inimitable hues of jewels—pools of lapis, streaks of emerald and malachite, beds of liquid sapphire. The concrete steps of Clifford's Harbor were lined with darky women wearing straw bonnets peculiar to the Bahamas, usually with a white kerchief beneath the crown like a hood, although more than half of them were selling beautiful varicolored broad-brimmed hats made of the island's chief product, sisal, which with handbags of the same are found nowhere else. "Remember Adriana, mister, when you come back.—Git away from here, chile, this white gentleman is comin' my way!" one called as we climbed into *Mickey Mouse*, as our driver called his somnambulous motor.

The undergrowth along the way seemed a bit scrubby after the other islands, probably owing to the thin coat of soil covering the wind-swept, skinny backbone of the

land. Wild pecans, century plants in bloom with the central stalks sometimes fourteen feet in height, dusty flame trees with brown pods hanging almost within reach, and dwarfed green bay trees bordered the bleak roadway. A few gimcrack villas of natives, with an ugly tank on the roof to catch the precious rain water. The most interesting sight was the row of old slave huts on the shore; like the other houses and walls, they were built of blocks of coral sawed into squares. The old forts just outside the city testified to the colony's perilous and turbulent past.

At the outskirts of the town we were welcomed by a better road and a black sergeant of police on a motorcycle. We entered by a meandering street, past four-square houses of white all with elaborate green sun shutters and copses of bougainvillia and hedges of hibiscus. Bay Street, the main thoroughfare, was captivating, reminding us of a tinted engraving of a village street "way down East" with a rural bustle of business and traffic—with a few startling exceptions. There were the rambling stores with antiquated show windows piled with curious assortments of all they had, with antique clerks—when they were not colored—wearing choker collars showing their Adam's apples, some with muttonchops; some sidewalks covered; bony nags hitched to carryalls, buggies and buckboards, and an assortment of all the old Fords that should long since have been pensioned off, being dodged by scores of persons on bicycles. Negroes lounging at every corner. True, there were many shops strictly the outgrowth of tourist traffic—chiefly the liquor and perfume trade, which were swamped on the landing of every cruise ship's pas-

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sengers, for it is usually their first or last stop and they buy heavily.

Strolling about Nassau is a delight, dividing one's time between climbing up the back streets among the residences to the eminence of Mount FitzWilliams, where Government House stands, and visiting outskirts of the town, and seeing the life of the darkies. Discovering for one's self the statue of Columbus on the hill was an experience. We found the 200-year-old cotton-silk tree with a wrinkled trunk like that of a rhinoceros hide while we were seeking the post office off the Public Square, and incidentally ran into the barracks yard of the police! Then we climbed the Queen's Staircase, a flight of what seemed one hundred steps leading to Fort Fincastle, hewn out of the solid rock, and found Gregory Arch, the inclined tunnel in Market Street. We lingered in the telephone exchange until we were sure we had located the exact place occupied by the auction block where the slaves were sold when it was called Vendue House. We visited every church before we returned to Bay Street.

On other occasions we found our way to quaint villages, visited Blackbeard's Tower—recalling the one in St. Thomas, which somehow did not seem so authentic—the caves, once the catacombs of Carib chieftains and later the haunts of pirates.

So far as we could see, New Providence and all the other Bahamas lack that which had made all the other islands first rich, then poor—sugar. In its place, the sea has offered two profitable commodities: sponges and turtles.

Prowling and snooping into all the ramifications of the



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sponge fisheries and industry was as absorbing as though we had been closely related to the sponge family ourself. We first loitered through the open flower and sisalware market in the public park, where the delicately woven and richly dyed products of sisal and basketry vied with the flowers in their really artistic designs and bright hues, presided over by as colorful and witty—sometimes saucy—a lot of negresses as we had found in the Indies. Finding our way through an alley off Bay Street, we came upon the sloops of the sponge fishers tied up along the rather tumbledown quays. Each small boat was a family affair, the deck strewn with pots and pans and personal belongings, including in some cases dogs and goats, the women washing and cooking, the family wash hung out to dry, the children playing perilously over the water's edge, like Chinese youngsters aboard the river junks. Loungers lolling about in every possible position of lassitude. Piles of sponges in all states of shelliness and cleaning, together with huge turtles on their backs, conches, and other extraordinary sea progeny that had been caught by accident or intent in the quest for sponges.

A little beyond was the sponge market, a great shed with sponge merchants' stores on either side and railings behind which the bidders stood and called their bids. On the dirt floor within were scores of mounds of sponges of every size, quality and state of perfection, some in heaping basketfuls. The sale, barter and haggling went on until noon. Then, to our surprise and delight, piles of sponges were discarded; we went in and picked up enough fairly good ones to last us and our friends for a year. One of the usual—though not so persistent as farther south—black

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guides took us to the warehouse of one of the greatest dealers in the world, where we learned that the Bahamian industry is in the hands of Greeks. There we saw sponges by the thousand, being clipped and sorted according to grade in great barns filled with bins. Some special varieties were being bleached to be sold at higher prices. We had three sizable sponges hydraulically pressed into a square package half the size of a loaf of bread.

And finally we, too, yielded to the urge, and made the inevitable visit to Dirty Dick's and Blackbeard's. Once pirates' dens; always pirates' dens. Blackbeard's is the more interesting, though less popular, of the two. In the rear is a pool and you may pick out your green turtle steak "on the fin," and the kitchen is what purports once to have been the haunt of Blackbeard himself, at least there is a fine antiquated interior with an enormous fireplace, a charred mantelpiece and smoked rafters. And we ended up in Dirty Dick's, with its touch of Harlem, booze and jazz, where you will hear sung the recently composed classic of the island:

*When you're down in Nassau by the sea  
And you're all pepped up on gin and baccardi,  
Then you'll dance and sing all night  
Till the island heaves in sight  
And you hear the natives singing merrily:*

*Mammy don't want no pease and rice and coconut oil!  
Mammy don't want no pease and rice and coconut oil!  
Mammy don't want no pease and rice,  
Mammy don't want no coconut oil!  
Just a bottle of brandy bandy all the day!*

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*Mammy don't want no glass of gin  
Because it's bound to make her sin,  
She says it keeps her hot and bothered all the time!*

*Mammy lay down to sleep last night, she closed the door!  
Mammy lay down last night to sleep, she closed the door!  
Mammy lay down to sleep last night  
And she closed her eyes so tight,  
Then she called to Poppa, "No!  
There ain't goin' to be nothin' more! Nothin' more!"*

Already, our simple West Indian black had begun the change with which we are unhappily familiar in our negro heaven—and all negroes' haven—our American Harlem. Is he better off there, or worse?

Meanwhile, we have returned to San Salvador, the Bahamas, after following Christopher Columbus through his whole cycle of discoveries, and like him we have discovered a New World. Literally, we have seen the rise and fall of Spain. It is an arresting thought—Spain's colossal failure to retain and maintain the empire that she had discovered and established, that would have made her, for centuries to come, the richest and mightiest nation in the history of the world. Perhaps her natural course of empire was run; at least, she had her day as the mightiest nation for approximately two centuries. Her failure may be traced to a single major cause, that should contain a lesson worth considering by all other nations for all time. Her downfall may be laid at the feet of Mammon, the god of Greed. The thirst for gold. Money madness. Inordinate profits for the few without due recompense for all.

Actually, as we write these words, Spain, whose glory

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for a time dazzled the world and whose might conquered it, her princes sitting on the thrones of half Europe, her empire covering almost half the earth, is destroying the church whose especial guardian she was, toppling over the monuments erected to her shining achievements, tearing out her own entrails and committing hara-kiri. It is a sadder spectacle for us, who have seen with our own eyes the relics of the glory that once was Spain's.



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WE are congenitally indisposed to writing a Guide-Book—telling wayfarers what they *must* do and just how to do it. Like all other human beings, travelers are perverse and prefer to find out things for themselves, in the ultimate. Our preference has been to write a Me-Book, recounting what *can* be done by anyone, for the simple and incontrovertible reason that we have actually done it ourselves.

Our purpose has been not so much to “cover” every possible touristic point of interest, like an encyclopedic reporter, as to reveal the intrinsic merits and virtues of strange places in terms of personal experience and impressionistic pictures. Our material references to specific persons, prices and perquisites may prove to be the most immaterial things in our narrative. They are merely convenient pegs upon which to hang your tourist purse, togs and itinerary. In this changing world, the men may have passed on, the houses been torn down and the ships broken up before you reach the Land of Heart’s Desire but, count upon it, the things that they symbolize—become even more mellow and delightful perhaps in their progression—

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will still flourish long after you have been gathered to your fathers.

We have visited at least twice all the islands stressed; some of them many times. Our following notations on Ways and Means are in the main—like the foregoing narrative—matters of experience rather than of conjecture. They should be adjusted and evaluated according to your own needs and desires rather than our particular and peculiar predilections and tastes. Frequently, our emotions are easily stirred, our enthusiasms run high and our impressions prejudicial but, we like to believe, they are always sympathetic and sincere.

It becomes almost farcical when we try to be didactic in our advice to fellow travelers. We prefer smaller and homier boats to bigger and better liners that have no more personality than a huge hotel; and we do not fancy cruises, because we cannot bear to be “managed” beyond a certain point.

That brings us to one of the attractive features—to us—in touring the West Indies, and also face to face with its chief difficulty. In the first instance, nearly all the vessels that make the solely inter-Indies-Caribbean trips are smallish boats, with distinct personalities that you come to love and hate with all the relish of a member of your own family. Second, you cannot hope to cover all the islands under discussion, by means of these *gemütlich* lines, without returning and sailing again from your basic port at least *six* times. (See pages on “Lines and Schedules.”) Besides New York, one may sail from Boston, Baltimore, Miami, Key West, etc. Speed is no object on any of these smaller boats, and, so far, their tariff is com-

paratively low. Keeping in step with the cruise craze, they all carry a cruise director who is responsible *pour le sport* by day and hot-cha by night. Harmless persons, if you let them alone. You may count upon the swimming tank being set up around the end of the second twenty-four hours out.

The quest or realization of sports—except aboard ship—hardly comes into the Caribbean cruise picture. Stopping over makes it a different matter. Sharks are a common and ferocious beach companion in many of the Caribbean waters, although there are excellent beaches and bathing facilities on a number of the islands, if one cares to sacrifice the sometimes precious time: Nassau, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Virgin Islands, St. Vincent, Barbados and Trinidad. If one insists on golf, one may have it in the same proportion. But, there—we seem to be yielding to elements totally foreign to the true travel idea.

When we go to the West Indies we are truly going abroad just as much as when we cross the sea to Europe, but, whereas Europe is merely foreign, the Indies are exotic as well. The Indies are closer to home: first, because their nearness permits the desirable “short trip” to many a short-time traveler; second, because they reveal to us firsthand the early beginnings and evolution of the New World in which our own America has achieved pre-eminence and over which we have taken the helm. They are the stamping grounds of our particular prehistoric period. Cuba, Santo Domingo, Panama and Haiti have furnished text for pages of our military history on whose soil American blood has been spilled in the cause of what

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we have chosen to call the "idea and principle of liberty." Finally, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are under the flag of the United States.

In its favor, in our opinion, in contrast with pampered European travel, we shall find what is becoming so rare in this modern movieized world, lands and peoples in a state bordering on native simplicity, at times almost primitive. For this reason we shall have to make certain adjustments, for the time, in our curricula of machine-made conveniences and homemade appetites. Under the circumstances, it will be useless, ungracious and a trifle witless to complain of the scarcity or nonexistence of ice water, buckwheat cakes and pumpkin pie, room-with-bath and hot running water. In their places you may enjoy rare substitutes, palatably and personally, the delights of which either Gotham or Gallipolis will never even approximate.

On the other hand, if one insists upon the constant company of the sophisticated herd, who "always dress for dinner" and carry six-feet of their own country with them and stand firmly upon it, one may even gratify those notions at intervals along the way. To speak from our experience within the hackneyed deluxity of a few, there is Hotel Prado, away off in Barranquilla, where one may lave and bathe in a private tub and sip one's cocktail in elegance, but with the accompaniment of a native string and shell band in its own habitat that adds something exotic. Havana has half a dozen de luxe caravansaries with the Hotel Nacional at the top, where one may overlook the Malecón and remember the *Maine*, if one chooses, while gazing out over an azure sea upon its watery grave. And



there is San Juan's (Puerto Rico) Hotel Condado—one-time Condado-Vanderbilt, which gives the keynote—in whose Garden-by-the-Sea one may dance at midnight under the Caribbean moon. The whole world knows Kingston's (Jamaica) Myrtlebank Hotel that made the planter's punch famous. The British-Colonial, Nassau, with its marine gardens, measures up to all modern first-class specifications, with others less pretentious.

Thereupon, we run out of the ultramodern hostelries, and are secretly glad of it, since they detract from the strictly native scene and atmosphere. Except, perhaps, the government's Bluebeard Castle (St. Thomas), which, alas, accommodates less than threescore at a time. There is a second-class Hotel Grand, cheaper and not half bad for all of its native superciliousness. And our Hotel 1829, which in our chapter on the Barren Virgins we have warned you to patronize at your own risk. The entire hotel capacity of the American Virgins amounts to less than seventy-five.

Port-au-Prince (Haiti) offers even less room to prospective sojourners; perhaps sixty available rooms, many of them already in occupancy. Yet we know of nothing more lovely than a week we once spent at Ralph Barnes's San-Souci in Port-au-Prince, lolling beneath its cool open-air arcades at the end of a palmed driveway, a steady stream of natives and their donkeys from the hill country, laden with exotic produce, padding past the gateway. Unless it might be the Hotel Splendide, presided over by the charming and witty native Madame Franckel, in the mansion which in palmier days had been her home. Seasoned citizens from every quarter of the world sitting

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at dinner on the broad veranda, where we lingered in a pool of common interests like characters in a Somerset Maugham novel within earshot of the voodoo drums in the hills. We include the Queen's Park Hotel, Port-of-Spain, among our immemorables. It happens to be first class, but happily not modern. Just a rambling old Victorian relic, very British and a little smug in showing its medals of lists of distinguished guests who have stopped there (there is no other place to stop, to speak of, except Sands, which is more of a French restaurant and can accommodate only a handful), but not stuffy. Its broad dining veranda and old darky waiters and well-mixed drinks soon make it endearing. The Marine Hotel in Bridgetown (Barbados) belongs to the same class, that has been accommodating the "best people" for several generations and can't get over it. But that sort of thing, after all, bothers only the "best people." Bridgetown is filled with other hotels and boardinghouses, villas and cottages enough to take care of several hundred in or out of "season." There is an Aquatic Club—as on several other British islands—admitting visitors to all privileges (adding a slight charge for movies and dances) for something like a shilling a day. Barbados, Trinidad and Jamaica, if you must have your resort life in English, with emphasis on Jamaica for those who insist upon the nonnative white seclusion of a Montego Bay. As we have already said, we liked the little native Pelican Hotel in St. Vincent. But for more charm, there is the St. Antoine on the heights back of Castries (St. Lucia), with a pleasant balconied "hall" overlooking the harbor, cool porches, peaceful and lovely, in the shade of bougainvillia, croton, bamboo and palms, where some-

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thing was said about a dollar a day with meals. And there was that Hotel de Balata in the lush tropical hills of Martinique, a few miles above Fort-de-France. And a still more charming spot, a quaint old boarding place not far from Basse-Terre (Guadeloupe), down a lane shaded by tropical verdure, with a series of green bathing pools in a glen and noted for their curative waters. As a matter of record, the more adventurous tourist may always find a lodging with board in or near *any* partially white town. The squeamish better not try it, for they will find it crude by comparison, more often than not innocent of plumbing, but always bounteous in hospitality. Nor is it necessary to "go native"; they have only to look back a couple of generations, to America and "life on the farm," as it used to be. Furthermore, let us keep in mind that we are in a black man's country.

The Indies—with the exception of Havana and Panama—will prove to be most disappointing to those seeking "night life." Not even San Juan. There is Carl's Place, just outside of Port-au-Prince (Haiti), and another dance hall on the shore. There are sailors' dives and a few disreputable rumholes; but why go into that? The black people, as a rule, are far more modest than the whites, and seldom promiscuously immoral, save in cases of collusion and patronage. On more than half the islands there is to be found a pleasant place to take tea or to get a drink. The English always have some sort of club, that is not too exclusive, for white visitors. Movies are to be seen in all the larger towns, some of them made more interesting—at least to us—because of a not-too-"native" touch. Many blacks are camera-shy—some from

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superstition, others out of sheer native dignity; another class demands pay for being photographed, which seems fair enough.

In the tropics haste is well-nigh unthinkable, as you will learn by even a brief residence—and to appreciate likewise the virtues of the siesta. The black boy expects a tip for everything he does for you, whether you ask him to do it or not. This pestiferous custom has two sources: first, the nice, pitying tourists—usually Americans—who want to give every ragged person they see a coin, perhaps with the idea of reforming him, in the hope that this misplaced philanthropy will lead to his, too, becoming a nice person like the giver; second, a really pitiful state of poverty. The money is usually spent in some utterly ridiculous and improvident manner. The same precautions should be taken about overeating on fruit found in abundance in the tropics, as should be observed in overeating of macaroni in Italy. The results are about the same, only it seems harder to throw it off in hot countries. The water in towns is almost always fit to drink; if you don't believe it, have it boiled or drink bottled water.

A surprising number of island countries support local or state Tourist Bureaus—Cuba, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, in particular—which are worthy of being consulted by those stopping over. In privately hiring a guide, or using boat or motor service, it will be wise to make your bargain first—just as the price is understood in your neighborhood A. & P. Store before you make your purchase. In the British islands in particular, a printed tariff must be shown. There are often cut-raters around and an occasional gyp artist and tour-

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ists who do not play the game. In this lamentable respect, the world is the same nearly everywhere we go.

This brings up two important considerations, sometimes neglected. Shore Sightseeing Trips are no less an intrinsic part of a West Indian "cruise" trip than is going ashore at Cherbourg, or Bremen, or Gothenburg—unless you have just gone cruising for the "sail." In many cases, the port city may suffice—never for us, however. But fancy going to Martinique without bothering to visit St. Pierre and Mount Pelée, on the other side of the island? Or Cristobal dock, without actually seeing the Panama Canal in operation? In nearly every instance, shore trips are extra—actual transportation charges, sometimes with an addition for luncheon or what not. (The Puerto Rico Line is an exception, including shore trips in Puerto Rico—to Treasure Island, with lunch—and in Santo Domingo with luncheon at the Country Club—and, on return to San Juan, dinner and dance at the Condado.) In our opinion, shore trips are absolutely indispensable, if one has not already seen the outstanding features of every island which they try to cover. In the case of the Furness West Indies Line, for example, practically every noteworthy feature is covered on every island stopped at on the shore trips, and the cost of them all is a trifle over twenty-five dollars. The Colombian Line, in its Haiti-Jamaica-Puerto Colombia-Barranquilla-Cartagena-Panama circuit, has a similar low-priced arrangement. A shore-trip fund is therefore to be kept in mind in making up one's cruise budget.

The second consideration, so pertinent at this point, is that of the functions and services of the Tourist Bu-

reau, or Agent, with which every prospective traveler or tourist does not seem to be acquainted or even to understand. These organizations are made up of highly efficient travel experts whom they place freely and gratis at the service of the traveling public. Whenever you are in doubt, or are seeking definite or comprehensive information about the West Indies—or any other place or route in the world—consult them. Indicate your proposed objectives and ask them to make up a sample itinerary, with inclusive cost, to fit your purse and the time at your disposal. They make no additional charge for services and the prices quoted are the fixed and standard rates offered by the transportation companies and hotels themselves. Furthermore, their network of foreign staffs and agents is at your disposal, ready to take almost personal charge of you and your problems en route. Or, you will find a similar service department connected with nearly every Steamship Line, Railroad Company and Hotel Association, of any importance. Both of these agencies will gladly provide you with attractive booklets further elaborating and illustrating points of interest and accommodations on every step of your proposed journey. Their gratuitous services and world-wide system make modern travel a simple matter for either the green novice or the seasoned globe-trotter.

Travel to and in the West Indies, then, resolves itself into a mere case of personal adjustment, acceptance and a complete surrender to clime, customs and so-called crudities, which we have tried to set forth in the foregoing narrative of our own personal experiences and gratification. We might almost say that those blessed

isles were made to order for the American traveler and approximate a tourists' paradise. What you miss in one island you will surely find in another—from historical ruins to race courses, from splendid cathedrals to your own denominational churches, from motoring aplenty on excellent roads to hunting and fishing, from primeval jungles to the most interesting Botanical Gardens in the world. Hot—yes; but seldom anything like a broiling summer's day on the streets of Boston, Washington or St. Louis. There is no cold winter, and a change of only a few degrees in summer. Rainy seasons, beginning in May usually and lasting for a couple of months, need never deter one. Hurricanes are at their height in September, but preceded nowadays by radio advices long enough in advance to escape all but the attending excitement. Peril results from them about once in a blue moon, which concurs with our almost daily life risk in our own motorized and machine-menacing world at home.

Because of its very primitiveness, there are not many things to buy in the Indies. Panama, St. Thomas and Curaçao are approximately "free ports," where French perfumes, cigarettes, de luxe liquors, and a few other articles may be picked up at half-price. But milady should consult authorities on new customs rulings permitting only one bottle of each kind of perfume, and confiscation of certain others bearing preëmpted trademarks. Rum at six dollars a case in the Lesser Antilles—the best of these Cockspur, in Barbados, perhaps—but the United States has cut down free entry to only a few quarts. Monkeys from St. Kitts, and other animals, may be put into quarantine for thirty days, at a dollar a day. Sponges

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are cheap in Nassau and bay rum in the Virgin Islands. Tropical fruits and flowers will probably be chucked overboard by customs officials on landing. Basketry is the best buy, and the finest and cheapest are to be found in St. Thomas (Virgin Islands) at the Coöperative Shop. Nassau makes the exquisite sisal baskets and hats; St. Lucia, huge oil-jar shaped baskets, as well as guava jelly in large jars. St. Vincent is the headquarters for luffa. For local handiwork, the traveler will always find a self-help shop in the British islands. Walking sticks of sharks' vertebrae and rare woods and materials—in most of the islands, as well as along the Spanish Main. Curious and useful objects of mahogany come mainly from Santo Domingo, while one may buy unique coin-silver bracelets in one reliable shop in Port-au-Prince, and spurious ones on the streets.

As our subsequent schedule will show, the Pan American Airways cover in detail a large portion of our West Indies-Caribbean area. Where ships take days, they take hours, and days in the air are equivalent to weeks on the sea. If you are air-minded, your course is clear and comfortable.

We should hardly know which to suggest for a first trip to the Indies—the Puerto Rico Line trip to Puerto Rico-Santo Domingo-Puerto Rico on its very fast *Borinquen* or *Coamo*—we have happy recollections of them both. The Bull Line *Barbara* makes the same journey from Baltimore; it is cheaper and slower. Our particular Bull Line favorite is the easygoing old *Catherine* that lumbers along between Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas and St. Croix. It is an unmitigated prevari-



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cator, never keeping its word as to starting, and it has all the other foibles and weaknesses of the "native" in its stubborn personality, picturesque personnel and colorful passengers, for all of which we loved it and hope to travel on it again.

Or, the Colombian Line's fleet of three steamers that sail weekly from New York and give you both Haiti and Jamaica (twice—going and returning), Puerto Colombia and Cartagena, South America; and Cristobal-Colón, Panama.

Finally, we return—and will keep on returning so long as we have sea-legs—to our Furness West Indies cruise of the Lesser Antilles, the gem of them all. Not altogether because of the old *Nerissa* on which we made our first journey in these waters, but because this voyage unfolds more of natural beauty, of exotic charm, of historical interest and of tropical wonders than any other we can name.

It makes precious little difference to our traveler or tourist, whether they be White or Black Elephants in the Caribbean, because, intrinsically, they represent one of the high spots of travel inquiry and adventure in the whole world.

Bon voyage!



## COST SCRIPT

### WATER AND AIR LINES SERVING THE WEST INDIES \*

#### *Water Travel*

- Aluminum Line: Service every two weeks to Haiti  
Service every two weeks to Kingston, Jamaica  
Service every week to Santo Domingo  
Service every two weeks to Guadeloupe  
Service every two weeks to Martinique  
Service every two weeks to Barbados
- Baltimore Bull Insular Line: Service every three weeks to Puerto Rico
- Barber Line: Service every two weeks to Panama Canal Zone
- Canadian National: Service every three weeks (Boston) to Bermuda, Nassau, Kingston  
Service every two weeks (Boston) to Bermuda, St. Kitts, Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica, St. Lucia, Barbados, St.

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	Vincent, Granada, Trinidad
Colombian Line:	Service every week to Haiti Service every week to Jamaica Service every week to Panama Canal Zone Service every week to Puerto Colombia Service every week to Cartagena
Dollar Line:	Service every two weeks to Cuba Service every two weeks to Pan- ama Canal Zone
Fred Olsen Line:	Service every week to Panama Canal Zone
Furness Line:	Service every two weeks to Pan- ama Canal Zone
Furness West Indies Line:	Service monthly to St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. Kitts, Antigua, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Mar- tinique, St. Vincent, Barbados, Trinidad
Grace Line:	Service monthly to Panama Canal Zone Service every two weeks to Carta- gena
Johnson Line:	Service monthly to Panama Canal Zone
Luckenbach Line:	Service every two weeks to Pan- ama Canal Zone
Lykes Line:	Service every two weeks to Cuba
McCormick Steamship Line:	Service monthly to Puerto Rico Service monthly to Panama Canal Zone

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Maersk Line:	Service every two weeks to Panama Canal Zone
Munson Line:	Service every week to Cuba Service every two weeks from Trinidad for New York Service every two weeks to Nassau
N.Y. & Cuba Mail Line:	Frequent sailings to Cuba
N.Y. & Puerto Rico Line:	Service every week to Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo Service every week to San Juan and other Puerto Rican ports
Panama Pacific Line:	Service every two weeks to Cuba Service every two weeks to Panama Canal Zone
Panama R.R. Steamship Line:	Service every two weeks to Port-au-Prince and Cristobal
Prince Line:	Service monthly to Panama Canal Zone
Red D Line:	Service every week to Puerto Rico Service every three weeks to San Juan, Curaçao, Panama
Royal Netherland Steamship Co.:	Service every week to Haiti Service every two weeks to Cartagena Service every few weeks to San Juan, Curaçao, Trinidad
Standard Fruit Co.:	Service every week to Jamaica Service every week to Cuba Service every week to Panama Canal Zone

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United Fruit Line:	Service every week to Jamaica, Cuba, Panama Canal Zone, Cartagena, Puerto Columbia, Santa Marta Service every week to Cartagena Service every week (New Orleans) to Cuba, Panama
Waterman Line:	Service every two weeks to Puerto Rico

*\* Note:* Kindly note that the above sailings apply only from an American port, and service schedule is entirely according to winds, whims and tide. Consult your most convenient travel bureau for specific information, as this list is not intended as a practical guide, but rather as illustration of the wide scope of lines at your service.

### *Air Travel*

Pan American Airways:	Flight three times a week to Puerto Rico Flight three times a week to Haiti Flight three times a week to Jamaica Flight daily to Cuba Flight once a week to St. Thomas Flight three times a week to Panama Canal Zone Flight twice a week to Barranquilla Flight once a week to Antigua Flight once a week to Guadeloupe Flight once a week to Fort-de-France Flight once a week to Trinidad
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